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TAYLOR. THE FARM.

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THE FARM;

A NEW ACCOUNT

OF

RURAL TOILS AND PRODUCE.

BY

JEFFERYS TAYLOR.

AUTHOR OF "THE FOREST," "WONDERS OF THE OCEAN," &c. &c.

WITH EIGHT ENGRAVINGS ON STEEL,

AND

TWENTY-SIX ON WOOD.

SECOND EDITION.

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INTRODUCTION.

SOME years ago I thought myself a very clever little fellow, standing in need of much less instruction and advice than others of my age, and certainly deserving of nothing in the shape of correction or even of reproof. I was wonderfully proud of my knowledge; — never ashamed of my ignorance; — vain of myself altogether; — so that, I am afraid, my friends thought me, what I really was, an intolerably conceited little man.

I became extremely fond of the notion, which I had somehow acquired, that old folks in the country could not possibly be half

so wise and clever as young folks in town. It was, therefore, with high indignation, as well as surprise, that, when my grandmother Granger came to see us one Christmas, I overheard her say, that my cousin Philip, who had never been to London in his life, was worth a hundred of me at book or business; and that she knew I had not sense enough to drive a calf to market. To make the matter worse, my own parents assented to the truth of this, with a sigh; and it was finally arranged that Philip should come and spend a month with us in London, that I might improve by the pattern of his intelligence and good conduct.

I went soon afterwards to my mother and cried about it; alleging that I certainly could read, write, talk, and do, as well as my country cousin Philip.

"Well, well, Frederick," she said, "I hope

it may be as you say. *I* did not hear your grandmother call you stupid, although I know she has been rather disappointed in you. I am sure we shall all be very glad to find that you are likely in future to be rather more commended by others, and that you are less apt to commend yourself than hitherto. We wish Philip to find a suitable companion in you. I know he wants a young friend, and a very friendly lad he is;—you also need one, who is able to shew you what sort of conduct we expect in a boy supposed to be really clever and well behaved."

Though this was said in the kindest manner, it was a sad mortification to me. To shew, therefore, *my* good behaviour, when Philip, arrived, I scarcely spoke to him, but withdrew as soon as I could, and pouted to myself. My mother at length came to me;

—" Frederick," she said, " I am really so ashamed of you that I cannot take you out with us this morning, as I had intended. We are going to view the Tower ; and this moping sulky plan you have acted on would certainly make Philip think you a mere simpleton, incapable of speaking about or understanding even those things which you have often seen. Good bye ! we are going !"

Now I had no expectation of this turn of affairs ; and had reckoned much on shewing my superior knowledge to Philip, in a condescending way, that morning. But I knew it was of no use to complain. My mother was not in the habit of saying one thing and doing the contrary. When she changed her mind, it was always before, not after, she had mentioned her intentions. She well understood my faults and temper ; and if I had any good

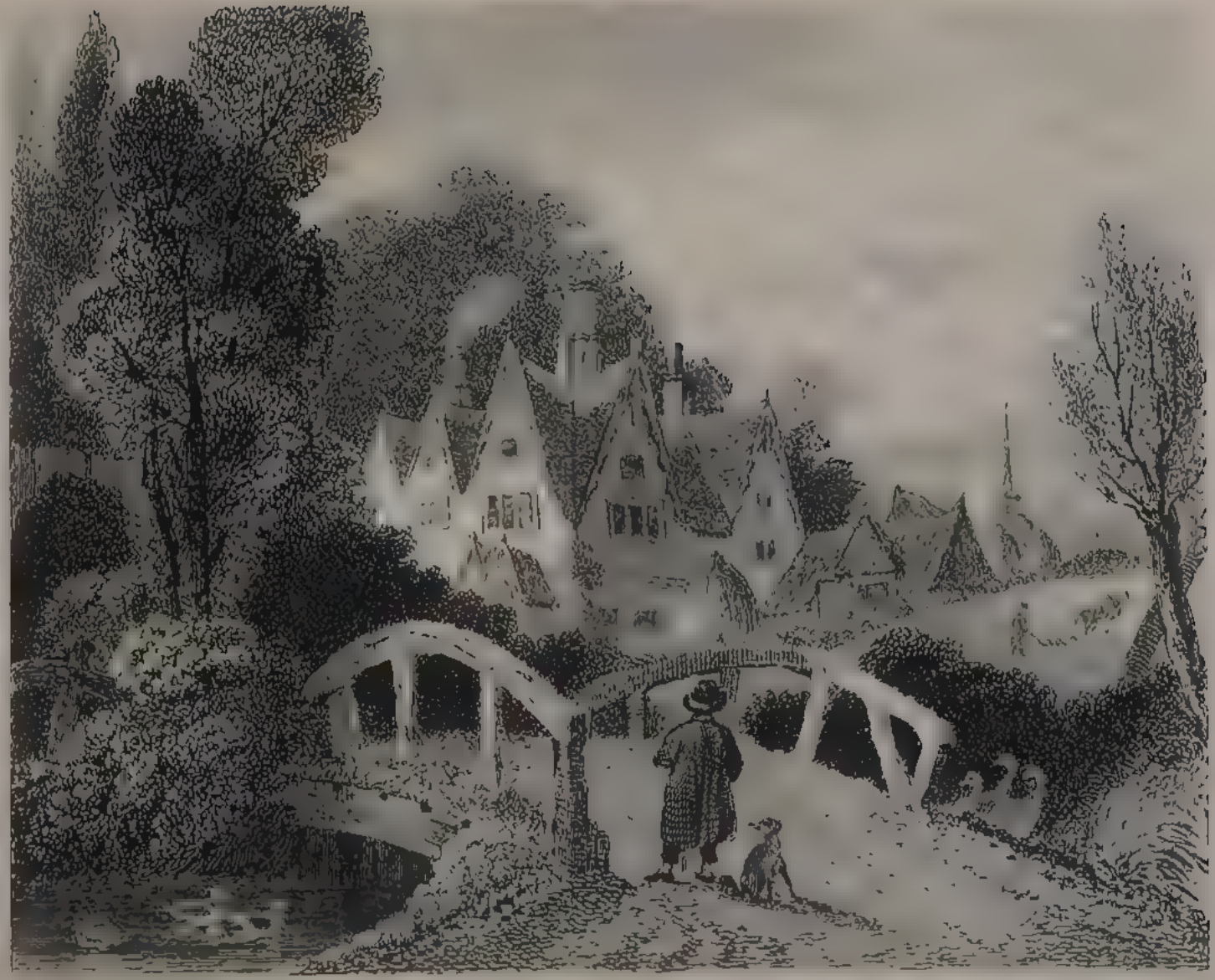
qualities, she, I am sure, was more aware of them then than I am now.

Unfortunately for my vanity and self-conceit at that time, my parents seemed resolved that I should never succeed, when I endeavoured to exult over my rustic cousin. They did not indeed *seek* to reprove and vex me before him; but they always managed to let Philip *appear* right when he *was* right—that is to say, they would have *fair play;* and that very rarely made me appear to advantage. I quite failed in convincing persons, as I had hoped, that because I was born in London I must know every thing; and that, because he had never till then been in London, he could know nothing.

Before Philip had been with us three days, I found that I liked him almost half as well as I liked myself; and that he knew, and

could do, several things, which it would be quite as well for me to remember, and to perform also, if I could.

I am not about to take my young readers over London with my parents and country cousin; because they probably have, or can procure, many little volumes full of information on city affairs. Perhaps they will feel surprised, and even merry, when they find, that I am about to range the *fields and meadows* for them: — to tell them what *I know* of ploughing, sowing, reaping, threshing, hay-making, sheep-shearing, and so on; in fact, I shall write from my cousin Philip's residence, and describe, as pleasingly as I can, the most interesting particulars connected with THE FARM.



Peak Hall Farm

Publd June 1.1832 by John Harris, St Paul's Church Yd

THE FARM.

"SCRAPE your shoes," were my grandmother's unceremonious words, as she stood in the doorway, whilst I walked up a somewhat miry pathway towards the house, called "Peak House;" being her home, and that of my uncle Jonathan, and his son Philip.—"Yes, and rub them too," she added, as I endeavoured to step over a huge straw mat, which lay just within the threshold.

I saw no one but this old lady for an hour or two; my uncle and Philip being then about the fields, and busy. I began to think that my grandmother was a really cross dame, and

that she would use me harshly; but I was mistaken. She was civil enough, according to her own notions; and, as I soon found, kind enough, even according to mine. "Sit ye down, Fred," said she; "are ye hungry, or thirsty, or both together, like the rest of the Londoners, when they have a mind to pay country-folks a visit?"

I replied, strangely enough, that I did not know. She then pulled off her spectacles, which she always did to prevent their *shaking* off when she laughed much; and laugh indeed she did—more a great deal than I liked—at my expense. However, she construed my doubts hospitably, by ordering in a most plentiful repast. The shining knobby leg of the walnut-tree table was pulled out, the circular flap of it raised, and a cloth laid, which was presently garnished with cold fowl and ham,

buttered cakes hot from the oven, cheese, butter, plum-cake, and home-made wine. During that meal, I remember, my notions of country people underwent an important change; for I had visited a London aunt, who never gave me any thing but a biscuit when I went unasked; and who always wore such magnifying glasses when she carved at dinner, that her slices of pudding were scarcely bigger than shreds of cucumber. After a good hour's amusement at my knife and fork, I drew back. "Well, now can ye tell me what ye think of yourself?" asked my grandmother. I replied in a most satisfactory manner. "It is lucky that ye are pleased for once," she added, "Sally, take away; and sweep up the young gentleman's crumbs; and—wipe the table."

Thus she contrived to remind me of my untidy ways, without actually reproving me;

which I have since thought was both wise and good-natured. She then replaced her spectacles and resumed her needle. My uncle and my cousin Philip soon afterwards came in, and greeted me very kindly.

It is not my intention to amuse my readers by making a story of my visit, which indeed lasted many years; for I was eventually placed with these my relations, at Peak Hall, to acquire the farming business; nor shall I make them merry, by telling *all* the particulars of my ignorance and blunders whilst a novice at the farm. Suffice it to say at present, that Philip and I agreed remarkably well; and, on the death of the old lady and my uncle, we took the farm together, and have occupied it as partners for several years, with success and mutual comfort.

With regard to the method and operations

of agriculture, I shall endeavour to please my readers and myself, by giving the information, either in the way I first obtained it, or in the form I now possess it, as the case may require. I shall begin by describing the Farm-house and premises.

Peak Hall, or as the country people usually call it, "*Gablesides*," was once the residence of the lord of the manor of Beechy-side and Abbot's Eleigh, in the county of Essex. The house obtained not either of those names without a cause; for its roof-peaks, or gable-ends, are no fewer than twelve in number. Three of them form the roof on one side; two on another; three at the back. Two projections for staircases have each a gable; and the very roomy porch in front has two. The building is all of red brick, and exhibits in front some curious sculptured ornaments in

that material. The windows are of diamond quarry glass, and, like those of churches, have strong stone mullions, or partitions, instead of wooden frames. The ivy on the further side has crept unmolested nearly to the garret windows; and hangs nodding from the porch-roof in a very picturesque manner. Two enormous six-columned chimneys stand twenty-five feet higher than the ridge tiles, and give a sort of dignity to the building. The front door is six feet wide, seven feet high, and nearly three inches thick. It is studded — for I have counted them many a time — with eight hundred and nine, iron knobs; it has an iron grating, about six inches square, through which to parley with strangers after night-fall; and it swings on hinges, reaching the whole width of the door. The sides of the porch have twisted spiral balusters, through

which to look, without going from under shelter. Here, in the warm summer evenings have we sat on the oaken settles, on many a happy occasion; and, somehow, memory gilds the balusters, and the tree-tops, and the dangling ivy sprigs, of those early years, with a brighter richer glow than do the setting suns of the finest seasons now. There used to sit my parent's aged mother, kind and wise in her way, and who, notwithstanding some odd ways — fewer, by the by, and far less mischievous, than those of one of her grandchildren — was beloved and respected for her benevolence and good sense by all who knew her. She and her son, my uncle Jonathan, are gone— and it is in vain that we try, by still taking our meals in the porch sometimes, to bring back old scenes, since the old faces cannot be replaced.

It must not be imagined that the front of this ancient dwelling, pretty and remarkable as it is, can be seen completely from the road leading nearest to it. The farm buildings, as is common in this part of the country, stand nearly before it. The long barn and cow-sheds, if they were not built on rather lower ground, would hide the house altogether. The frontispiece gives as good a view as can be taken, and is from a spot at a short distance from the bridge. I long regretted the apparently wrong situation of those buildings; but never more than when, by my foolish proposal to take them down and rebuild them at the back, my poor grandmother was angered almost to fits with me, her rash descendant. We have become used, and quite reconciled to those things ourselves now; and perhaps even attached, like the old folks, to their very

faults; so they are in as little danger as ever of removal.

As in farming we have a good deal to do with *acres*, I may as well state here, that four thousand eight hundred and forty square yards make one square acre, and that each side of that space will therefore be about sixty-nine yards and a half long. Each acre contains four roods, each rood forty poles, and each pole rather more than thirty yards. Our farm-yard occupies, with the various buildings, about five roods, or an acre and a quarter. The buildings are principally these: — two great barns; stables; two granaries; hay-barns, cow-houses, piggeries, hen-houses, pigeon-houses, and a cottage for our head man and his family; though this scarcely stands in the yard. There is a railed partition, forming, with the hedges, an inclosure, called the *rick-*

yard [into which, I am happy to say, no incendiary has yet entered with his tinder-box]. In this part stand now four stacks of hay, containing, together, about two hundred loads; five stacks of wheat-corn; two of clover-hay; a bean-stack or two; a faggot-stack; and a tolerably large stack of straw. Towards the north the cattle-yard is fenced by a halm, or stubble-wall, which has lasted, and is likely to continue several years.

I must now describe the buildings a little more particularly, and first, the barns. These, on the usual plan, are oblong structures. The largest is nearly sixty feet in length, and about thirty-five feet wide. This space is divided into three parts: the middle, reaching across the barn, from door to door, is called *the floor;* being laid with stout and smooth oak boards,—so smooth, as most boys know they

usually are, that a good slide may be had upon them;—and *a bad* one, if a projecting nail catch the foot, and cause an unlucky fall. This part, on which waggons enter to deposit their loads, passing out at the opposite doors, is separated from the sides, called *bays*, by planks or rails, a few feet high. In the bays the corn is stacked, ready for threshing. A small granary is inclosed in one corner of this barn.

As to the principal granary, I remember trying to shew my wisdom once, by saying that it was nonsense to set it upon legs, and make men ascend with heavy sacks on step-ladders. The twelve stone pillars on which it stands have each a projecting cap, like a mushroom top; at which I also laughed, as being utterly useless, till my uncle told me he thought *I had a mushroom top*, not to know

that granaries were so built, to keep a floor free from wet; and that the pillars were capped to prevent rats and mice from climbing into the place, where they would be glad enough to obtain board and lodging. The granary has sundry bins or partitions for various grain and seeds.

The stables have stalls for fourteen horses, including two of better quality for our own riding nags. I need say nothing about racks and hay-lofts, which are equally common in town or country.

The hay-barns are like roofs of houses set on very tall legs, with opening weather-boards extending part of the way down, something like those of a brew-house. Hay, stacked in them, of course, requires no thatching; but I always think that which stands in the open air the sweetest.

The cow-houses consist of a long range of sheds, principally for milking and for nursing the calves. These have stalls, with moveable frames of wood, made to receive the head of the cow, and detain it, lest the animal should turn and throw down the milk, or otherwise interrupt the process. Piggeries and dove-cotes need not be described, as they may be seen in other situations. The brewhouse and bakehouse join the dwelling.

I have ranged the farm-yard with my note-book in my hand, and can find nothing more to detain us at present, unless it be to notice some large wooden frames, which Londoners might mistake for coops for young ostriches. They are cow-cribs, and contain winter fodder for cattle.

We shall be extremely happy to shew any of our readers over the farm, and to ask them

in doors, whenever they may honour us with a visit. In the mean time I will ascend a rising ground, whence the greater part of the farm can be surveyed. Our four hundred acres consist of about thirty-five inclosures, divided, as is common in this county and other woodland parts, by ditches and hedge-rows, garnished with the varied forms of stately timber and leafy flowering shrubs. Of those inclosures twenty-one are arable, or plough-land, amounting to about three hundred acres out of the four hundred. The rest is pasture, meadow, wood, or waste, including roads and paths. I may say, without untruth or vanity, that our arable shews as good a *tilth*, and our grass land as good a *sward*, as any in the parish, large as it is; and I think the whole farm does fair credit to the skill and management of master and men:—but I must stop here; for

if I boast much, I shall remind my readers of my early self-conceit, and I had rather that it should be hereafter forgotten.

I shall now give my young friends the names of the fields as they lie before me. The farmer and his men could never understand each other, as to the particular cultivation and business to be done on the several parcels of land, if each had not its own designation, by which it could be referred to. I believe this is the case with all farms and large estates. Most of the names are evidently derived from pecularities of shape, soil, or situation; some from accidents, or incidents of life and husbandry. A few are difficult enough to account for. Our fields have all had their present names time out of mind. Those of which we cannot now perceive the meaning have, perhaps, in long use, become quite miscalled and

mis-spelt. Here they are :—*Fore Field; Back Field; Twenty Acres; Bridge Field; Bushy Croft; Little Bushy Croft; Mill Hoppet; Acre Piece; Flamsted Meads; Stony Field; Path Field; Pond Field; Little Go; Wood Side; Parish Field; Brook Field; Topsey Wood; Long Mead; Shoulder-of-Mutton Field; Great Hide; Little Hide; May Field; Pig's-Mutton Field; New Slip; Pole-hurst Side; Steeple Land; Steward's Corner; Eleigh Plot; Five Farthing Close; Abbot's Bury; Oak Field; Hatch Field; Lane Field; Peak End; Downshire Bottom.*

These are the well-known inclosures and plots of Gablesides Farm. I can put in a word of explanation with regard to a term or two in the list. *A hoppet* is, in Essex, and some other parts of England, a small piece of ground, usually near the house, elsewhere called a *paddock*. *Flamsted* [formed of *sted*, Saxon

for *a place*, and *flam* or *flame*,] indicates the situation of some village conflagration, of which the tradition still remains. *Little Go* is merely a short cut, or track-way, into the high road, passable only in summer. *Great Hide* and *Little Hide*:—the word *hide* was much used formerly for a plot or parcel of land; because measuring thongs were cut from the hide of a bullock, and as much as one skin, thus lengthened out, would inclose, was called '*a hide of land*.' In the days of William the Conqueror, this phrase was used for a hundred acres. As to *Pig's-Mutton Field*, the story is merely this, that, many years ago, a sheep was killed there and nearly devoured by a ravenous sow; but I rather doubt the tale. *Pole-hurst Side* reminds us of a neighbouring copse, or thicket; *hurst*, or rather *hyrst*, being the old Saxon word for a

grove. *Steeple Land* is a roundish knoll, of some height, from which spot the distant spire of Danbury Church can be occasionally seen. *Abbot's Bury* refers to some dwelling, or spot, connected with an abbot's history;—*bury* meaning simply a residence. Lastly, *Downshire Bottom* is a low marshy field, near the brook. The word *shire*, from the Saxon verb, which means *to divide*, is seldom used but for the great partitions of the kingdom into counties. Sometimes, however, as in our case, it has an application, of smaller importance, to the situation of a particular estate. I know a place called *Upshire Hall* in our county.

TILLAGE.

We find that, even in Paradise, man had employment appointed him, the object of which was, to aid nature in the production of food for his subsistence. It is true, that the varieties of the earth's provision were designed by the Almighty, without any of our contrivance, and that these have always grown in a way that the understanding of man has not been able even to comprehend. But, ignorant as we are, and vain as would be our attempt to interfere with the *designing part* of creation, we can do much by observation and the exercise of our reasoning and bodily powers: marking what circumstances of an external kind have an influence upon these things;

— what is favourable, and what injurious; so that skill and labour may arrange matters to improve the desired result. God entrusts the fitful gales of heaven to scatter innumerable seeds, which are to produce food or shelter for myriads of inferior animals, or to deck the wilderness with flowers. But he employs a more regular and important agency for the spread and cultivation of those plants, which are especially destined for the support of man and of those creatures which subserve to his wants; — even the mind and hand of the great consumer, man himself. It is not presumption to say that man assists the purposes of nature, any more than to affirm that the motions of the elements may do the same. The Creator appoints and employs the instrument, whatever it be, whether an intelligent or inanimate machine; and we may, therefore, as

truly admire his work and wisdom in the fruits of human art and labour, as in any of those natural wonders, in the formation of which the busy brain and finger of our race have had nothing at all to do.

Things are so ordered, excepting in a very few spots of the globe, that Nature performs but little for man, unless man, in his turn, perform something for Nature. She gives an abundance of materials and inducements, and then says, 'Work! Work!' If, instead of obeying this reasonable injunction, we merely reach forth an indolent hand to receive her bounties, she usually bestows them in diminishing and inferior portions, until, at length, our very necessities are unsupplied. In England, certainly, fruitful as it now is by the effects of human labour, we could scarcely exist a year on the mere donations of the soil

and of the skies. It is as true, that the great mass of the people *must work*, as that they *must eat*. They must ply well their brains and their hands, or the table even of the cottager will lose its plainest viands. Persons brought up in cities are too apt to think that grass and corn, beef and mutton, grow as matters of course; and that the countryman has nothing to do but to cut and eat. I hope to be able, before I have done, to shew my young friends that this is quite a mistake.

We will now take a little notice of those processes of moving the soil, which constitute the art of tillage.

The PLOUGH is, and has been, the grand implement of husbandry for this purpose, amongst all civilized nations. The form and power have varied much, as they now do in different parts of England: but the intent and general

result have been the same as far back as the ancient coins of Greece and Rome take us, many of which represent this noted agricultural machine, drawn by cattle and guided by a man, as now.

We cannot go farther into the history of the plough at present. As it was found that the more the soil is loosened, stirred, and

broken, the greater are its powers of production, it became needful to contrive some means of performing this operation on a large scale, in the most expeditious and successful manner. Spade husbandry, as it is called, does as well, perhaps better, where it can be accomplished; but millions of acres cannot thus be tilled.

In order, therefore, to move as much soil in as little time as possible, the plough was constructed. It consists of many parts; as the *coulter*, the *share* and *breast*, the *handles*, *rail*, *chains*, &c. The *plough-share* and *breast*, which are the principal acting parts in turning over the soil, consist of a broad and smooth surface of iron, having a sharp and taper toe, which enters, like a wedge, and heaves the earth off towards the right side. The *coulter* is a sort of knife, which is placed before the share, to cut the ground and detach the por-

tion ready for it there. The engraving represents one of the common sort.

The terms '*ploughman*' and '*clodhopper*' are used in a sneering and vulgar way by many who do not possess nearly the skill and knowledge of the humble peasant who guides this important machine. In the first place, the parts of it are by him adjusted to a very great nicety, with screws, hooks, and wedges, according to the kind of furrow required;—and then the direction of this in straight and parallel courses; the management, by the voice, of the horses, although a boy helps to guide them; the turning and returning correctly; and the arranging of the furrows in slightly rising curves, or *lands,* as they are sometimes called, to lay them dry, with water-courses between;—all these duties require the ploughman to have a correct eye, a strong and steady

hand, and a clear head for his business — which qualifications make such a man as none but extremely ignorant persons can despise.

Ploughing is often repeated, in various ways, before the land is sufficiently stirred and broken to make a good *tilth*. For this purpose, the field is sometimes crossed and re-crossed in different directions; if not, the ends of the furrows must be made good by a few cross-furrows, called *head-lands*. But, after all that the plough can do, the clods are still by far too rough and large to receive the seed until another machine has been employed.

This is the HARROW, a strong and heavy frame of wood, having a number of iron spikes fixed in it, to form a kind of rake for the surface. Three or four of these are frequently chained together, and, drawn by two or more horses, they produce a great effect in cutting, crumbling, and levelling the clods, which are also, in some cases, further broken down by the action of a ponderous wooden roller.

But the utmost skill in the performance of these mechanical processes will not ensure a good return, unless the master's management be also good. As the husbandman needs food and rest, so does the soil, where the kind of produce called *a crop* is expected. The food of land is MANURE; its rest is laying it down either for feeding, or A FALLOW.

Manure consists of various animal, vegetable, and mineral substances, selected according to the soil and the intended crop. With respect to animals, there is no part of them which does not, by dissolution, become a most useful ingredient for the restoration of an exhausted soil. Besides therefore, the commonest kind of manure, any refuse of the butcher and the fishmonger, the soap-maker and the sugar-boiler, is acceptable to the farmer;— who, of course, has in this respect an

advantage, if at no great distance from places where these are to be procured.

Lime, salt, burnt earth, sand, shells, soap-ashes, and I know not how many other things, with decayed vegetable matter, are applied to the earth, as a sort of repayment, for which, however, she always accounts with high interest. Meadows pay well for the best manure, but will be mended much, even by mere earth sprinkled on the sward.

There are many other things essential to good tillage, which the experienced and intelligent farmer attends to as he sees occasion; I shall mention only *weeding*, or *cleaning* the land, and *land-ditching*. The best opportunity of getting the field clear of weeds, roots, and other such matters, is afforded by the fallow. The ground is then at liberty to admit of continued ploughings; of thistle

and dock-irons, to eradicate the troublesome intruders, for which they are intended; and, if necessary, of the shovel and mattock, to remove suckers and roots of trees. Weeding, however, goes on to a great extent with the hoe and other instruments, when the crops are up.

Land-ditching, or draining, is almost as necessary on certain humid soils as any other act of husbandry; indeed, without this, in many cases, all other tillage would be labour in vain. Where water hangs in the land, on or near the surface, very long together, it checks the vegetation of farming crops, so as to compel the husbandman to adopt a remedy. For this purpose, he proceeds, with a long tapering spade, made for the work,—to dig gutters, or *thoroughs*, from eighteen to twenty-four inches in depth, in such directions across

the land as shall best suit the discharge of the water to the ditches at the borders of the field. Having done this, he thrusts in bushes, ready at hand, and on them places a close covering of straw. On this the earth may be securely laid. A hollow, sufficient for the water-passage, is thereby obtained, and no indications of the work are visible above, except the superior fertility of the spot, which, indeed, is sometimes distinctly to be traced in lines corresponding with the drains beneath.

Meadows and pasture-land do not of course require or admit of the labour of arable fields. Nevertheless, they need attention; and, if the land be at all good, they fully repay it. Grass lands, like others, will, in a short time, be overrun with weeds and suckers from trees, if neglected. Instruments are invented, therefore, as we have seen, to delve

these out; and the more diligently they are used the better; for even the grass is rendered more vigorous by the movement of the soil thus occasioned. The herbage also needs renewal sometimes, by having fresh hay-seeds, and those of trefoil, &c. scattered over it.

I have said that meadows want good manuring: this is usually done in frosty weather, when the heavy cart does not cut the sward. After this supply has been spread by the fork, children are employed, if necessary, to pick up stones, shells, and other rubbish, which may have been brought on. Soon afterwards, the field should be *bush-harrowed,* with a machine formed of bundles of thorny shrubs, attached to a heavy wooden frame, which, being drawn up and down by a horse, combs and scratches the manure and loose earth about. Then comes the roller — a huge cylinder of

wood, made to turn and support a timber frame of great weight, which sometimes is further increased by laying upon it a heavy piece of timber, a waggon-wheel, or some such ponderous body. This machine presses the earth and roots close, and levels many little hillocks which would otherwise encounter the mower's scythe, and take off its edge.

During the winter season, when there may not be much else to employ the men, the repairs of hedges, ditches, and other improvements, are usually attended to; as also the cutting and faggoting of any underwood, roots, or logs, to which the farmer can lay claim.

The division of enclosures by hedges and ditches occupies more ground than other fences, it is true; but they are generally less expensive, and a hedge, unlike a wall, or a rail, naturally keeps itself in repair. Gaps

and deficiencies are chiefly occasioned by cattle and wanton boys. When a new hedge and ditch are wanted, the ground is carefully marked out, and a line stretched along it, to guide the digger. He first pares off the turf, if any, and rolls it on one side. Then he proceeds to remove the earth, to the width, perhaps, of about five feet at top, and slopes the sides down, to the depth, it may be, of three feet, with a bottom of one foot wide, throwing the soil up on one side, ready to be formed into the bank. If the purpose be merely to divide land occupied by the same person, it may not signify on which side the embankment is made. But if it is to be a partition between my estate and my neighbour's, I must not, of course, intrude upon his ground at all, either for hedge or ditch. The boundary line therefore between us, I must make

the further side of my ditch; the earth I must lay on my own ground; so that hedge and ditch both belong to me. Persons are apt to think that the hedge and bank form the boundary line between estates; but this is a mistake. The side, or top edge, of the ditch furthest from the bank, must be the division of the property.

Good workmanship is very conspicuous in hedging and ditching performed by a competent hand. The sides, edges, and bottom, are expected to be as true to their proper form, as if wrought in a brick mould. If they are not so, the water hangs, where it ought to run, the bank crumbles down, and the employer very justly complains. The bank is planted with young hedge-shrubs, or sown with furze or broom, or else furnished with a dead fence of bushes stuck in and wattled together.

Old hedges are much improved by thinning, topping, and *laying*. A quantity of the old wood is taken out. The younger branches are then chopped *nearly* off, close to the root, taking care always to leave a small width of the living bark. The branches are then laid down *almost* horizontally, and tied to stakes, or to each other. The consequence is, those branches, instead of growing, as before, to a useless height, and scanty at bottom, send forth a multitude of shoots, which thicken the lower part of the hedge; nor does the wound inflicted by the hedge-hook make any material difference in the growth after the first season.

The wood thus taken out is either employed to stop gaps in other hedges, or faggoted for the oven. As I have, in a former little work, "THE FOREST," explained most of the processes of wood-cutting, splitting, and tying,

I shall not say any thing further here of those particulars of rural labour.

The winter is a convenient time also to mend roads, public and private; but sometimes this must be done in the summer. The farmer is allowed, instead of paying money for that purpose, to employ his team and carts for the repair of those by-ways in his parish which are not provided for by toll-gates.

Winter, though not the season, generally, for military enterprise, is not a bad time for the farmer to proceed against very many of *his* enemies, with all the advantages of arms, engines, and generalship, which he may possess; and I am not sure that the destruction of our innumerable agricultural foes would not be a greater benefit than the most complete and splendid victory over our worst foreign enemies. The malignant and grievous hosts,

which I now refer to, are rats, mice, weasels, stoats; many kinds of birds and insects; and last, but not least in mischievous importance, almost all the tribes of four-footed or flying game. The last are privileged classes, for reasons stated elsewhere. With regard to the others, no qualification for killing them is needful, but the power of catching or finding them; and, for this purpose, various schemes and arts, and clever ones too, are made use of. Rat-catching and mole-catching are professions by themselves, which are as useful to the community as many of higher reputation. As moles burrow and pass in long subterranean passages, but near the surface, the catcher inserts, in the track-way of the little miner, a spring trap, the catch of which is attached to a strong stick, thrust in the ground, and bent down with force, so as to rise and pull vio-

lently a string to which the under-ground snare is attached. The animal, in passing, is thus noosed and choked without the possibility of escape. The mole-catcher has two-pence or three-pence apiece for every mole he destroys.

Rats and mice are destroyed in various ways, and to a great extent, by dogs and cats, and owls, which are more useful in a farm-yard than many persons who are paid in money to do their work. Otherwise, they are taken by traps and snares, or destroyed by poison. They are, however, rarely got rid of entirely, when even all these methods are continually adopted. The other animals of the mischievous sorts are destroyed by the gun, when seen.

PRODUCE OF THE FARM.

We have taken a little notice of the farm, and the husbandman's needful labours upon it, before he can enjoy the fruits. Let us now see what those products are; how he gathers them in, and disposes of them for his benefit.

It is evident that these things consist of varieties of the vegetable or animal kingdoms of nature. We will attend to vegetables first, for they were man's first food, and occupied his earliest agricultural thoughts.

The vegetables chiefly cultivated in England for the food or use of man are of three principal kinds:—grain, or seeds; roots; and

the herbs whose *substance* chiefly is used for food or manufacture.

In the first class, I include the principal species of corn, and some other seeds: as wheat, oats, barley, rye, peas, beans, tares, &c. In the second division, we have potatoes, turnips, parsnips, carrots, and mangel-wurzel. In the third class, we must put the species of grass, clover, and other pasture plants; also, cow-cabbages, and other leafy products of the soil: likewise hops, hemp, flax, and teasels.

Now I do not pretend to say that my list or arrangement will include, by any means, *all* the plants which may be found on farm lands: indeed I could easily add many others which I can call to mind; but they are not grown in quantity, or for purposes of nearly equal importance with those I have named;

and are, perhaps, in many cases, sown only by way of experiment.

Neither must it be thought that all the plants and products which I have named and described are grown on every farm. Some lands grow no barley, potatoes, or turnips; and I scarcely ever knew a farmer who attempted all in one season.

WHEAT.—Of all grain, this is the first in importance and value, at least to the civilized world. There are several sorts; but I do not see that I have room and opportunity to distinguish them much in this little book. So I shall only say, that we farmers talk chiefly of white and red wheat, spring wheat, and revets.

I dare say if man had been employed to contrive or invent a seed, or fruit, for the

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COMMON WHEAT.

SPRING WHEAT.

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BUCK WHEAT.

chief support of his race, he would have made it nearer in size to a quartern loaf, than is the diminutive grain of corn, which Nature has thought the best form and bulk for the purpose. Of this kernel, or corn, a considerable part is husk, which adheres so closely, that it is needful to bruise the whole together, and sift out the meal, to separate it. Yet there is "bread enough, and to spare," as far as *quantity* is concerned, wherever the wickedness, the folly, or the indolence of man does not defeat or check the powers of nature and of his own skill and industry. It is a remarkable fact, and one which ought to impress us with sentiments of admiration and gratitude towards the great and good Author of Nature, that wheat, the best of corn, will grow and thrive in almost any climate where vegetables constitute the food of man. From the equator to the

very borders of the polar regions, this constant friend endures the scorching beams, or braves the northern blasts, and comes, a golden gift, alike to the sun-burnt fainting African and the snow-wrapt Muscovite. Seeing that it bears such extremes of climate, spreading from zone to zone on the globe, it is not wonderful that it sustains better than any other corn the inclemencies of our own changeful skies, and the disadvantages of our most unfavourable seasons. Wheat may be compared to a very sensible person, who likes and enjoys good things as well as any one, but can put up with bad circumstances better than most other persons. It thrives in a temperate climate, a fine shining season, a rich soil, and under good management; yet, when all these are reversed, so that other things perish, this hardy plant will live, produce its seed, and supply, in some

measure, the table of even the least worthy husbandman.

Wheat, for the main crops, is always sown in the autumn, and on land which has been a *fallow* the preceding season, or which has produced some different crop, and been well manured. It was the general practice of the ancients, and has been of the moderns, to steep the seed in liquors of a briny kind, before sowing; some, however, think that water alone is just as good; the benefit being rather, by means of a fluid, to separate faulty seeds, which swim at the top, and are easily skimmed off, than to impart additional powers of growth. The land having been prepared by the plough and harrow, in the manner before explained, the seed is to be sown. There are three principal methods of performing this operation;—namely, by *broadcast*, by *dibbling*, or

by *the drill.* The first is, no doubt, the most ancient way; and considerable skill is required from and practised by the husbandman, in performing this part of his duty. His walk, his throw, his grasp, must each be accurately timed and measured, or his ground and seed would be greatly wasted, by having some spaces scarcely supplied, and others so over-done that the plant would fail for want of room. He steps along the furrows with great regularity, and flings at such intervals, and in such quantities, as will ensure the designed allowance, which varies a little according to circumstances — about two bushels to the acre is usual. It is afterwards harrowed in, and sometimes even ploughed; and in a few days or weeks appears the tiny tender blade, which has to endure the utmost rigour of our winter season.

Nothing but experience could persuade us that this is the best way to ensure the ensuing harvest. Wheat of a certain sort is, indeed, sown in the spring; but this is apt to produce straw, rather than corn. The previous growth of the root is needful, to sustain the productive ears. The slender and blackened appearance of the blade in winter does not much discourage the farmer. In this state he frequently subjects it to the trampling of men and horses, and to the apparently crushing influence of the timber roll: for he considers it of more consequence to break the clods, and close them about the roots, than to care for the blade which then appears.

Wheat that is *dibbed*, or *dibbled*, is dropped, two or three kernels at a time, into holes, made by a man with a pointed instrument in the shape of a T. This he holds by the cross

piece, and thrusts the longer leg, which is pointed with iron, into the ground, at the distance of a few inches, with considerable quickness as he walks. Children usually follow, and drop the seed into the holes which he makes.

The *drill* is too complex a machine to be accurately described, or understood here. It is a sort of box, containing the wheat, borne on two wheels, and drawn by horses. The wheels, as they go round, give motion to a sort of cylinder within the box, in which are fixed instruments, like tea-spoons, at proper distances. Underneath are cutting irons, which form grooves, or drills, to receive the seed, as it is delivered from the spoons; and the process is thus completed with mechanical precision, such as pleases the eye, when the plant issues from the soil. However, the advantages of this contrivance, on the whole, are

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WINTER BARLEY. SPRING BARLEY.

not so great, but that many proceed by the old method still. We must now leave the wheat-field for the season.

BARLEY is a grain and ear more nearly resembling wheat than any other corn. The character by which any may distinguish it, is the brush, or beard, consisting of long slender spikes, or needles, which proceed from each kernel, and extend considerably beyond the ear. The principal use of barley is for making beer; for which purpose, it first undergoes a process, called *malting*. It is also ground for bread in many countries; and in our own to make food for hogs. It has, besides, many medicinal virtues. This grain is always sown in the spring of the year, in dry weather. Some of the early sorts are ready in nine or ten weeks. It is sometimes sown at two operations, and after-

wards rolled, to press the earth close, and level it for the mower. We also roll it when it has been up two or three weeks, which causes the plant to produce a great number of stems.

OATS.—This is a beautiful variety of the corn tribe. The grain remains not in its case or ear, as in the former sorts, but, starting thence, hangs in single kernels, depending from the stalk, having a very light and graceful appearance. The minute seeds of various grasses are thus arranged, and form some of the most elegant of vegetable structures. There are two principal varieties of oats cultivated in England; the white and the black. White oats are most common near London, and black oats in the north. Dr. Johnson, who bore no kindly feeling towards Scotchmen and their country, said, in the first editions of his Dic-

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OATS.

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RYE.

tionary, that oats were "food for horses in England, and for men in Scotland."

I have said that wheat will *grow* almost any where; but there are many places where it does not *thrive,* and yet oats will do very well. In poor lands and wet seasons, these take less harm than other corn; and good oats may make even better bread than bad wheat. They are sown here in February and March.

RYE is an inferior grain, the ear of which somewhat resembles that of barley. It is, however, much used for bread, with or without a mixture of wheat, in many parts of Europe. In England it is sown chiefly as pasture food for cattle. Rye, of a bad quality, has, it is said, proved poisonous to its consumers, in some seasons.

PULSE CROPS, &c.

THESE are so called, because they are supposed to be gathered by *pulling*, not by mowing or reaping; but, considered as farming produce, the meaning does not in that respect apply.

The chief pulse crops are peas, beans, and vetches, or tares. These all grow in pods.

The PEAS cultivated for the table, and used in a green state, are chiefly grown by the market-gardeners; though some farms near London supply them. With us they are designed for use, or sale, as food for cattle, principally hogs; or the better sorts, which will split, skin, and boil well, are sold to the

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FIELD PEA.

shops, for soup, puddings, and other table requisites. These sorts bring the best prices.

FIELD PEAS are usually sown in drills about February or March. We consider them an uncertain crop; but when the weather and insects give them a chance, they pay very well.

FIELD BEANS are those, chiefly, which are used for the feed of horses. They are smaller and darker-coloured than the garden sorts. We have them dropped or dibbled in holes in February, and cut them in September. They are extremely subject to a destructive black insect, called "*the collier*." These terrible foes to the bean crop, fix, at first, near the top bud; and sometimes invest the stalk, leaves, and pods, nearly all over.

TARES, or Vetches, are a small sort of beans; grown not for the sake of the seed, but for the green herb, as cattle food. We generally sow them early enough to allow of their being fed off, or cut, so as to make room for a crop of turnips afterwards; or, if the land is to be prepared for a wheat crop, we sometimes plough them in as manure.

COW CABBAGES, called also *drum-heads*, are grown on some farms to a considerable extent, and to a very large size. The original stock, from which the cultivated cabbage is derived, and from which also we obtain colewort, borecole, cauliflowers, and brocoli, grows on cliffs by the sea-side, in Kent, Cornwall, Yorkshire, and Wales. In the wild state, we should scarcely know this plant as a

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TARE.

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MUSTARD.

cabagge; the leaves being few, and extended, and destitute of the *heart* which is obtained by culture.

MUSTARD, COLE, and RAPE, are produced on some lands, particularly in the north, in considerable quantities; but we have little of them in our vicinity. The Durham mustard is reputed the best; but it is much adulterated with other seeds, before it reaches our tables. It is frequently used in medicine, as well as in food.

"Rape and cole-seed," says Mr. Bingley, "are sown intermixed in many parts of England; the plants being distinguishable in their growth, by the cole exceeding the rape in height, and by being more soft, tender, and less branched and bushy. When sown separately, the cole is usually consumed as food

for sheep and cattle: the rape is allowed to stand for seed. The harvest commences about the month of July; and as the seed, when ripe, is easily shed, the threshing is often performed in the field. The operation is a sort of play to the people employed, and is considered a season of festivity."

The chief use of rape-seed consists in the oil it contains, which is employed largely in our cloth manufactories. That portion of the seed which remains after pressure is called *oil-cake*, and is given to oxen for food.

Vegetables in less demand than those I have named, or which are grown for the purposes of medicine or manufactures, do not form usual crops on farms in general; such as saffron madder, coriander, caraway, and some others. Besides these, there are plants of vast importance for their respective uses, which are not to

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SAFFRON.

be met with like corn and hay; as hops, hemp, flax, and teasels. I shall notice these in their place, however, lest it should be thought that I am quite ignorant of or indifferent to all farming products which are not grown on our own land at Gablesides.

SAFFRON is a kind of crocus; a preparation of which is used in medicine, and in the art of dyeing. In Cambridgeshire, near the borders of Essex, this plant has long been cultivated to a great extent. Saffron Walden derives its name from this product of its vicinity. As soon as the flowers of this plant appear, they are gathered by hand, in the morning, before they open; a part of the flower is afterwards picked out; this being subjected to heat and pressure, forms a cake, which is the drug that bears the name. The management of a plant

of this sort, of course, is best understood in the places where it is most generally cultivated. I suppose our folks here know as much of skinning nutmegs as of preparing this article for use.

MADDER is produced in many parts of England and Holland; and the roots of it, when peeled, dried, and powdered, yield a beautiful red colour, without which those whose business it is to dye cloths would be put to considerable inconvenience. So insinuating is the colouring property of this plant, that animals who feed upon it have their very bones stained of a ruddy hue. Madder is also emloyed in medicine.

CORIANDER my neighbours grow; but our soil is not well suited to it. It is frequently

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MADDER.

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CORIANDER.

sown with teasel and caraway, because these do not come to perfection until the second year; so that the coriander may be harvested without injury to them. It is cultivated solely for the sake of the small globular seeds, which are used by distillers, druggists, and confectioners, to impart an aromatic or pungent flavour. It is sometimes mixed with dough to flavour bread.

CARAWAY SEEDS, I need not say, are employed in the same way; although, as substitutes for plums or currants, I always thought them, when a boy, quite an imposition of the cook. The plant grows wild in many places. It is harvested in July, and threshed out in the field.

HOPS.

And now must I travel out of Essex into Kent, to learn something of the management of this plant on a large scale. It must not, however, be supposed that parts of our own county, and of many counties besides Kent, do not produce this important commodity.

The hop plant is a native of Britain; but there is reason to think that our ancestors were not aware of its use, until they learned it from the Continent, in the reign of Henry VIII. Without the dried flower-buds of this plant, which are the hops of commerce, our barley wine, or ale, would be unpalatable and a quickly-spoiling drink; so that, unless some substitute for hops were used of old, we need not

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HOP.

envy our forefathers the "nut-brown-ale," of which our ancient ballads tell.

I suppose I scarcely need say, that this is a winding, climbing plant, rising from a root that continues many years in the ground, although the plant itself perishes at the close of every season. A hop-plantation requires several summers' growth, before it is in good order for produce. The plants begin to appear about the month of April. When they are a few inches above ground, poles, about twenty feet high, are driven in for them to twist themselves upon. The season for the hop harvest is about the middle of September; and a busy, bustling time it is in the great hop countries. Men, women, and children now find plenty to do for some weeks. The method is this: long and large boxes, or baskets, are prepared. The plants are cut

off close to the earth, and the poles, being pulled out, are laid across those baskets with the bines upon them; the hops are then picked off.

The next process is collecting and drying them in a kiln; after which, they are housed for some days in the stowage rooms; and, at last, forced into bags by the foot and leaden weights. The persons who perform this operation are called *packers*.

The best hops are put into finer bags, which are called *pockets;* the inferior sort only are called *bags*. When the picking is accomplished, the bines, or stalks, are cleared from the poles, which are stacked, or piled together, for future occasions. The halm, or straw, of the plant supplies much fuel, and is sometimes burnt on the soil for manure.

Hops are a very uncertain crop, and therefore a most anxious speculation to the growers.

A heavy duty is laid upon them; consequently the excise-officers watch the whole process, lest frauds on the revenue should be committed. Of the woody part of the stalk, after it has been soaked in water, a coarse kind of paper may be made.

This brings us to notice plants, which are especially cultivated as materials for manufacture; I mean HEMP, FLAX, and TEASELS.

HEMP, FLAX, AND TEASELS.

HEMP is one of the herbaceous plants, and grows to the height of five or six feet. It has a stiffish stalk, narrow finger-formed leaves, and inconsiderable flowers. It might easily be passed by, as a weed of worthless form, by uninformed persons. There is, however, scarcely a plant that grows, excepting those essential for food, which ranks with this for importance. It forms the *harness* of the blast which tugs our navies on to distant shores; and its use in the unnumbered forms of thread, twine, ropes, canvass, sacking, and other cloths, is beyond estimation, or even the most general survey.

The principal country for hemp, as an article of commerce, is Russia; few other coun-

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HEMP.

tries grow nearly enough for their own consumption. It is, indeed, cultivated in some parts of Britain; particularly in Suffolk and Norfolk. The soil which suits it best is a moist loose sandy loam. It is sown in April or May, and the plants are ready for pulling up in three or four months. That which is ready first, is called *fimble;* the later *karle,* or *seed hemp.*

As soon as the plant is pulled, it is tied in bundles, and set up to dry; at the end of about ten days, the bundles are loosened at the top, and the heads are held upon a hurdle by one person, whilst another threshes out the seed with a small flail.

The hemp is prepared for manufacture by being spread out on the field to dry, so that the weather may separate the fibres; or else it is steeped some days in stagnant water.

The next thing is to cleanse away the bark from the stalks. This is done either by the hand, or by machinery constructed for the purpose. It is afterwards beaten in mills, and then combed, or dressed, by drawing it through instruments called *hackles*, like those used by wool-combers and others.

The commodity is then easily enough spun into thread, twisted into ropes, or woven into cloth, according to the required purpose.

Of so great importance to our shipping were the growth and manufacture of hemp considered, about fifty years ago, that Parliament directed a bounty to be paid on its production.

Hemp-seed is used as food for poultry; and an oil, of some value, is obtained from it. The inner woody stalks (for it is the bark only which is manufactured) make excellent fuel, where enough of it can be obtained.

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FLAX.

FLAX is another herbaceous plant, but of a much finer fibre and quality than hemp, and capable also of being bleached to snowy whiteness. Need I say that *linen* is hence obtained?

It is supposed that we are indebted to Egypt for this incalculably useful plant. Cotton, it is true, now largely supplies its place, but only as an inferior substitute, by no means as a rival.

This plant is cultivated with considerable success in many parts of England. Like hemp, it is sown in the spring; and the plants, when ready, are pulled up by the roots. Both stem and seed are objects of importance. The latter, commonly called *linseed*, yields a valuable drying oil for the painter's use and for other purposes. A liquor is also obtained from this seed, by means of boiling water, which our

nurses call *linseed tea,* and which is accounted useful for coughs and other diseases proceeding from irritation of the throat and lungs.

The flax intended for linen is conveyed in bundles to the place where it is to undergo the process of watering; there it is thrown into ponds of soft stagnant water, in which it is kept for several days. By this means the bark is detached. The bundles are then laid out on the grass, in regular rows, till the flax separates from the stalks on being rubbed between the hands. After various dressings, similar to those of hemp, it is fit for the manufacturer's use.

I knew a gentleman, a few years ago, who cultivated very successfully several crops of flax, on a small scale, in this neighbourhood. He was then tempted to proceed more exten-

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TEASEL.

sively; but he went on too fast; taking so much land for the purpose, and at so high a rate, that mismanagement and ruin were speedily the consequence. Probably, if he had been contented to increase his growth by a few acres yearly, he might have done well enough. I have sometimes thought that we farmers confine ourselves too much to the crops we have been used to; yet I do not like, in these times, to speculate much with soil and money, and so, like the dog on the river's bank, lose the substance for what may prove but an illusion.

Now for TEASELS. These are plants somewhat resembling thistles. When the flower has faded, the seeds are contained in a sort of honey-comb structure, shaped like an egg, abounding in small hooks of a hard and stub-

born substance. This teasel head, with its scratching hooks, is used by the wool-combers for raising what is called *the nap* on cloths. Several of the heads are fixed, either on boards, or to the outer circle of a large wheel, by which the purpose is accomplished. Nature supplies us with abundance of *materials*, but with very few *tools*, like the teasel head, ready for our use.

Fields of teasels, which are to be seen in some places, are not the most convenient thoroughfares for persons in flowing robes, very few of which would be left on the backs of such as might be compelled to hurry through them.

I rather think that, farmer as I call myself, I have omitted to take any account of a very material article of agricultural produce, which should have been noticed whilst treating of corn. Philip, to whom I have read this part of my performance, has had a very hearty laugh at my expense, and calls me "a farmer *not worth a straw!*"

Well then, I suppose I must say that the stalks of corn, and some other plants, are called STRAW; and as this article covers houses, litters horses, manures the land, forms the door-mat to the cottage, and the head-covering of the ladies, a word or two must be said about it; more especially as I have not forgotten such things as caraway seeds and teasels.

Wheat straw, being the strongest and longest, is so much better than any other, that little else is sent to market for common use.

After threshing, it is either stacked by itself, or gathered and tied in bundles, called *trusses*, to be loaded away for sale. Thirty-six trusses, each weighing thirty-six pounds, form a load of straw. This commodity is disposed of in the markets in the same manner as hay.

I may just add here, that the stalks of potatoes, beans, and some other such plants, are not called straw, but *halm*.

It is evident that, owing to the varied qualities of land, and the equally varying management which the numerous vegetable productions require, a farmer, if ignorant, unskilful, or negligent, will soon find an enemy in every circumstance around him. The wrong time, or the wrong place, or the wrong method, will

make his labour the most costly folly to which, probably, he could addict himself. Not many, however, of those who have been brought up to the business, err to this extent : it is *chiefly* those who turn from other pursuits to this, who find out, when too late, that they have not knowledge and industry enough even to become a farmer !

LIVE STOCK.

OXEN.

This part of the produce of the farm is that by which the occupier frequently realizes the principal part of his profits. Englishmen are fond of good living ; and would consider that they dined poorly indeed, if they had no other

viands than the choicest vegetable productions. They must enjoy the substantial and savoury blessings of beef and bacon, mutton, lamb, and veal, and all the varieties of poultry and of game, or they (at least the wealthier classes) think themselves objects of compassion, restricted to *vegetable diet !*

Well then, as they are able and willing to pay for these things, we farmers and graziers endeavour to supply their wants ; and are not sorry to have another way of disposing of our vegetable produce besides the sale of it for money. By feeding animals which are required for the table we get rid of our grass, hay, corn, and other things, in a more advantageous manner than if we were obliged to sell all for others to consume.

The first on the list of English meats, undoubtedly, must be beef.

The Ox—in a wild state called the *bison*—is an animal comprising the most useful assemblage of qualities and materials for the varied necessities of man in a civilized condition, of any creature with which nature has supplied him. Cattle of this class yield subsistence, living or dead; and this in greater abundance, of course, than the other sorts, which are inferior in size. A cow may be compared to a sum of money, from which a man may take continually without diminishing his store; for the *carcass* we may call the *principal*, and the milk and calves the *interest*. There is, indeed, this difference in favour of the animal as property, that she will yield in a year, perhaps, twice the value of her purchase and food; whilst the same sum in money will not generally yield in the public funds a twenty-fifth part of its own amount as interest.

In ancient times, and in other countries, the ox has been scarcely less useful as a labouring beast than as food. Our horses answer better for this purpose here; but still we may see them occasionally yoked to the plough or waggon. The pastures of Great Britain favour much the health and growth of these animals; so that our own beef, milk, butter, and cheese are unrivalled.

In enumerating the uses to which the body of this creature is applicable, we must reckon up all the different substances of which it is composed: the flesh, the fat, the intestines, the blood, the bones, the skin, the hair, the hoofs, the horns. For the use of the *flesh*, or *beef*, I will merely request my young friends to ask themselves the question at their usual dinner hour. That portion of the *fat* which is not eaten with the flesh helps to form candles

and soap. The *blood* is employed largely in the purification of sugar, and in some other manufacturing processes. Of the *bones* are made knife and fork handles. The *skin* interposes, in the form of leather, between the tender foot of man and the harsh or humid soil. The *hair* serves, in the mixture of mortar for plasterers, to give it a tenacity, or power of holding together, which is most important for walls so covered; the *hoofs* and *horns*, softened by heat, are moulded into almost any form for various implements of incessant utility — such as handles, combs, and lanthorn panes. The clippings, parings, and refuse of the hide, and other parts, are boiled down to a jelly, which, being strained, purified, and pressed into moulds, constitutes *glue*, without which our chairs and tables would fall in pieces.

With regard to the purchase, sale, and ma-

nagement by the farmer of these and other animals, of which I shall have to speak, little need be said in this place. They have their varieties, in kind and quality: they have, too, their diseases; and there are different modes of treating them, according to varying customs, circumstances, and climates. These cattle are less dainty, as feeders in a pasture, than the horse and the sheep; and leave fewer *orts*, or refuse food, behind them. In winter, they need hay and turnips. The latter sometimes lodge even in their capacious throats; when an instrument, called a choaking rope—a remedy which to us would be worse than the disease—is used to push it down. A worse misfortune, at times, is occasioned by the animals feeding too freely on growing clover, which distends them to bursting and death, unless an incision be seasonably made.

SHEEP.

The sheep comes second in the class of animals destined for the service of our race. The Creator, with a power and wisdom infinitely great, *varies* the qualities of His unnumbered gifts. A sheep differs altogether from an ox; even more in nature than in size. Mutton, as food, is a change, which the health, perhaps, as well as the appetite, approves; and it constitutes a large, if not the largest, portion of the meat with which our tables are supplied.

But the sheep does more for us in the way of clothing than in food, by resigning to us, yearly, its ample coat. Wool has a property different entirely from that of other hair; for its constant tendency to curl and wrinkle, causes it, when woven, to thicken up, and make a closer texture, as it is manufactured.

This surprisingly important quality renders woollen garments the chief clothing of civilized man; and, in consequence, the wool is the means of subsistence to thousands of manufacturers in different countries of the world.

Sheep-shearing in England is only performed once in the year. In warmer climates application is twice made in the season to this compliant animal for his suit of clothes. We generally have ours sheared in June, when the state of the weather renders the operation at least safe to the sheep. The performance is rather a rough and toilsome one to, I believe, all concerned. The animals have first to be washed by an almost killing process—repugnant enough, I doubt not, to the subjects of it, who are generally averse to water. The shearing is any thing but play to the shearer and the shorn. Great strength and dexterity are

required in the man; and nothing less than the proverbial patience of the sheep to render the operation possible. The wool is cut exceedingly close; and there seems, indeed, great danger, as the instrument snaps along, that flesh, as well as the coat, will go. But they are rarely injured, unless succeeding chilly weather renders the loss of wool an uncomfortable privation.

Sheep and lambs are liable to various accidents and diseases.

The LAMBS, coming at a time when the season is frequently severe, are very likely to perish, without great care. Both sheep and lambs, being utterly defenceless animals, are also commonly the property most likely to suffer from thieves and dogs, notwithstanding the utmost caution of their owner.

The fat of sheep congeals more readily than that of oxen, and is much used for tallow. The skins, when dressed, form that useful substance called *wash-leather*. Of the intestines is prepared the article erroneously called *cat-gut*, used for musical and mechanical purposes. The varieties of this animal are also many.

HOGS.

Here is an animal, differing from the other sorts exactly in those particulars which render it capable of occupying a place in the service of man, that, otherwise, must have remained vacant and unproductive: with many of the poor it is invaluable, as being the only animal of the numerous farming herds that can subsist on the common and scanty means which are open to them. The cow and the sheep must have pasture and often costly care. Not

so the poor man's pig: with an unfailing appetite, he possesses incessant industry, and a universal taste or relish for almost any substances, animal or vegetable, of the select or refuse kind, which come under the cognizance of his oblique judicious eye, and his accurate and laborious nose.

If swine be a treasure to the cottager, they can scarcely be less so to the farmer, whose yard and stubble-fields are strewed with scattered food, which, but for the hogs, would be entirely lost. But these creatures, naturally roaming, though herding together, do not confine themselves to their owner's domain. In the autumn they sometimes absent themselves for weeks in the woods and thickets, in search of their natural food, the fruits of the oak, the hazel, and the beech, and those earth-nuts and esculent roots, which their acute sense of

smell and ploughing snout enable them to find.

As the flesh of pigs is in high request, when young, for the table; and, when large, forms a staple commodity, cured and dried as bacon, we farmers, besides consuming a great deal ourselves, find an important advantage in this sort of stock; and he is a bad manager, or very poor indeed, who does not, at the proper season, take care to be supplied with a sufficient store.

HORSES.

I have placed first such animals as are used for food, because they are the kind of produce, of the live sort, to which the farmer chiefly looks for a return in money. If, however, animals are to be ranked according to their apparent station in sagacity, dignity, and

beauty, the horse should certainly be the first on the list. But I am only treating of animals as they concern the farm; and, therefore, do not profess to class or describe them as the naturalist would do.

I know not how our stubborn British soils would be tilled at all, without the power and patience, the docility, and fitness for labour, of the horse. Eastern lands are generally light and loose; so that oxen, nay swine, can plough them up with ease; but here, though oxen are sometimes used, we must have horses, and those of a very powerful kind, to turn and break our ponderous and loamy clods.

Farming horses, therefore, should be of the larger sort. Their labour on the road, as well as in the field, is heavy. Loads of hay, corn, manure, &c. generally try their strength much, and require a good team. We have about

twelve plough or cart horses; three, of lighter make, for market carts; a chaise horse; and ponies, which are worth altogether about 300*l.* Pray, is it not exceedingly candid in me, to accommodate my young friends with these particulars, which we should certainly refuse to a neighbour, if he were impertinent enough to ask questions?

There is much in the care and management of horses, whether at work or in the stable, which makes the difference in their usefulness and condition. Plenty of food is one thing, but by no means the only point of importance. With regard to their work, judgment and gentleness in those who guide them will get more service out of this sensitive animal, than all the blows and ill usage which can be resorted to. The carman, waggoner, ploughman, horseman, or whoever he may be that

attends them, should, to be master of his business, understand the mechanical means, as to the harness and machine, by which his horses' strength is applied. He should understand the language which the animal also understands; and find out the temper of the different animals, which varies much, and cultivate a good understanding with each of his speechless but sensible companions in toil. It is well known, that where one man can do nothing with a horse, another can with ease induce him to perform wonders. The management of these and other animals, is, indeed, quite a talent, and a very valuable one, in a farming man.

The carter or waggoner always walks (ride he ought not) on the left, or *near* side of the horse, or vehicle; because, as the rule is to let things pass him on the right, or *off* side, he

would otherwise be placed between the two carriages, to his great inconvenience or danger. "Gee!" is the word, which makes the horse turn to the right; and "Come hither, woa!" the injunction which draws him towards the left; accompanied, sometimes, by passing the whip lightly over the neck.

When hay, or any other heavy load, is placed in a cart, care and judgment are necessary to adjust the weight with respect to a balance, so that it may neither *bear* nor hang too much; for, if placed too much in front, the stoutest horse might have his back broken by the pressure. On the contrary, if it is placed too much behind, it may even force him up from the ground.

The food of horses used for labour is grass, hay, oats, chaff, peas, beans, bran, and sometimes roots, as carrots, and even parsnips.

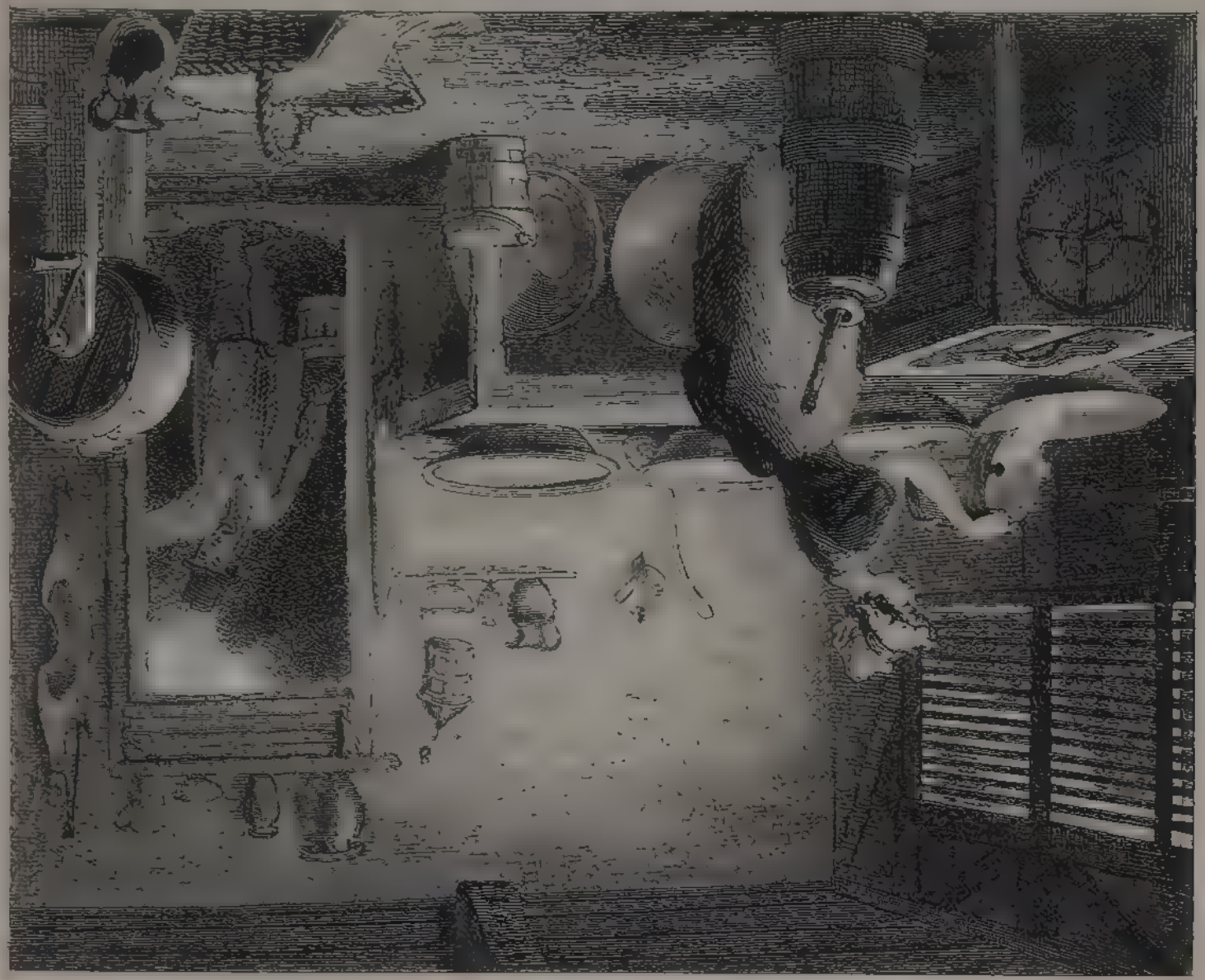
A change and mixture of food is generally beneficial. Wheat, given in any considerable quantity, will kill a horse.

The careful and successful farmer is never contented to let the management of his horses go entirely from under his own eye. He enters the stable, and sees that they are not only fed and watered, but well groomed, well littered, and made comfortable and safe for the night; and this he does, even though he may have reason to think his men are themselves proud of their team. I see that thoughtless boy is putting one of our best horses, "Blackbird," into the cart, to go to the mill, although he has cast a shoe. But I cannot expect him to mind his business, if I, by sitting here scribbling, neglect my own. I must go to him; so no more authorship for Farmer Granger till the evening.

THE DAIRY AND POULTRY-YARD.

Where was I when I laid down my pen, to send the lad to the blacksmith's? I see, I had concluded all that I thought useful to say about our farming horses. We must now say a word or two respecting the dairy and poultry.

Our most ancient and now infirm female domestic, Susan, has made, I think, as much butter as would freight a ship; and churned as much milk as would float it. Her powers are not now equal to her will and her skill; a fact, however, of which she is not aware, and which it would offend her grievously to mention. So we make the best of it; and render her what assistance she needs, without hint-



ing at all that she cannot do as she could fifty years ago, when, a ruddy lass of twenty, she was first hired by my grandmother in the kitchen.

I believe, if I could make Susan understand that I was pretending to print in a book any part of the business of the dairy or hen-houses, she would think the subject as much beyond my knowledge as I consider natural philosophy to be above hers. As I am quite certain she will never read my writings, I will venture to proceed with the best information I possess.

I suppose I need not say that the material, the management of which makes the business of the dairy, is *milk*. This kindly and healthful fluid, the benign sustenance of the infant from its birth, and, in one form or another, of man in all periods of his life, is produced by

various animals in quantity sufficient to afford to their possessors an important measure of their food. That of cows is chiefly used in England, as being more palatable, and better adapted for those changes into solid forms, which we require in butter and in cheese. It is the process of transformation into those substances of which I am now to speak.

The oily and thicker parts of milk naturally separate, on being left undisturbed for some time. The *cream*, as we then call it, forms a yellow coat at the top, which is easily skimmed off and placed in separate vessels: but this, without further operations, would never become either butter or cheese. To make butter, a violent mechanical agitation is necessary; to accomplish which, various simple machines, called *churns*, have been invented. I believe the oldest sort used in England is

the common upright churn; consisting of a high narrow tub, with a stick, or stirrer, passing through the lid. To the lower end of this stick is fastened a flat round board, not quite so wide as the diameter of the churn: this is the *beater;* and, being moved rapidly up and down, will in time make good butter.

But the best and most expeditious churn is in the form of a barrel, supported on a frame, and whirled round and round by a winch. The time required for the continuance of this motion, before *the butter comes,* as they say, varies much, according to the nature of the milk and the management of it, from one hour to half a day. When sufficiently formed, the butter is taken out, and pressed with great care, to get rid of the remaining fluid, called *butter-milk,* which would soon turn it sour. Such as is intended for present use, or sale, is

called *fresh butter*, and formed into moulds, measures, or lengths, according to the custom of the county. In and near London, it is sold in lumps, by the pound; in other parts, in portions named from fluid measures, as pints and quarts of butter. Go a little farther, and you must ask for *half a yard, or a yard,* of butter, according to your need.

Salt butter is packed in firkins, and pickled, or salted, to preserve it for a length of time. Many tricks are played by dishonest persons in this business to increase the apparent weight, or bulk, and to impose a bad article for a good one. Sometimes it is packed hollow, with water between; or bad butter is placed within, and good just at the ends of the firkin. So much has been done in this way, that an act of parliament has been made expressly against it.

Epping and Dorset butter have each a name in the market; and vast quantities are sold as such, which could not possibly have been produced at those places. This commodity is a most important article of commerce; fifty thousand tons weight being annually consumed in London only.

Cheese is another form in which milk becomes manufactured into a substantial article of food, and, therefore, of trade. We make but little here, and none for sale; because our county is not famous for this article:—nor, to say the truth, can we produce it of that mellow and flavoured quality which the Cheshire, Gloucestershire, and other dairies boast. The mere process is simple and easy enough. The milk is curdled—that is, the more solid parts are separated from the whey by a small quantity of a liquor, called *rennet*,

prepared from the inner skin of a calf's stomach. The curds, after being cleared of the whey, are collected together, subjected to a strong pressure in moulds or bags, and then dried for use. That which gives the peculiar flavour to Cheshire and other cheeses is, I believe, chiefly, the quality of the pastures on which the cows feed. Besides this, I have understood that other materials, such as suet and colouring matter, are commonly added.

That which is accounted the richest of all English cheese, is the *Stilton ;* not made, however, at the place of that name, but in various parts of the midland counties. It is not reckoned in its prime till it is two years old, and decayed, blue, and moist. But I am getting too far away from Gablesides, about which I can write with most safety to my readers. I will only, therefore, say, before I

return, that Parmesan cheese, made in Italy, is composed of a mixture of ewe's or goat's milk with that of the cow, and is much esteemed at the tables of the wealthy.

Our dairy contains stores of pickled pork, in capacious tubs; also sides of bacon in the brine, and hams destined for the chimney. I recollect, too, that we usually look for a dish of eggs there; and thus I am led to

THE POULTRY-YARD.

The species of fowls which best reward man for his protection and supplies, are four; turkeys, geese, common fowls, as they are called, and ducks.

Turkeys are natives of America, and were brought first to England in the middle of the 16th century. They are by far the largest;

and, as some think, the finest birds used for food in this country. On account of the estimation in which they are held, and the price they consequently bear, they become objects of attention in many poultry-yards; especially in Suffolk and Norfolk. At Christmas time, such supplies of these dainty birds are required for London that coaches are often loaded with them, to the exclusion of other passengers.

Turkeys are the most tender and difficult to rear of all our fowls; so that the money they fetch is sometimes scarcely a compensation for the trouble and their food. They must be fed, for some time after they are hatched, with a sort of pudding, made with milk and eggs. The hen turkey is by no means so good a provider, defender, and teacher of her young, as the common hen. When, therefore, num-

bers are to be reared, those duties must be chiefly performed by man. When of sufficient age, grain and barley-meal will do for their food, without which, although they pick about for insects, they would not attain sufficient bulk or fatness for the table.

Common fowls, though disposed of at a common price, are more profitable, in general, than the rarer sorts, because they provide for themselves to a great extent. I think there are nearly thirty hens in the yard, with I know not how many broods of young chickens. Half as many turkeys would require a yardful of people to take care of them; but these, though they need daily feeding, procure by far the greater part of their own subsistence by incessant assiduity. The hens are admirable and complete managers of their young, whom they provide for, teach, and

defend, in the most competent manner imaginable. It is curious to observe the old hens, when they have discovered a particle of food, calling their brood around them, by a peculiar cluck, which the young ones well understand, breaking it for them with the bill, if too large, and standing by, perhaps hungry at the time, scarcely taking a grain for themselves. Then again as to fierceness and courage — deficient as the hen is in these qualities when herself only is in danger, she becomes a winged dragon for her young, not hesitating to attack, with successful fury, animals twenty times her superiors in strength.

Our hen-houses have boxes partitioned for the nests, and poles for the fowls to roost on at night, provided with a sort of step-ladders by which the little ones may ascend,

before they can use their wings. The hen sits on her eggs for about twenty-one days, with such determined perseverance, that she will almost perish on her nest rather than remit her duty. Humanity requires that these poor animals should not thus be suffered to injure or destroy themselves by the vain continuance of their endeavours to warm into life eggs which cannot be hatched. Long after they quit the shell, the young chickens find warmth and shelter beneath their parent's wing; and will even run to it sometimes, when far too large to be conveniently protected.

In about three months, the chickens are fit for the table, or for stores. They are commonly fattened under coops, before they are killed; though, for my own part, I think a barn-door fowl,—that is, one which has

had the full run of the yard—quite as palatable, and perhaps more wholesome meat, than one gorged with excessive feeding, without exercise, or the enjoyment of its own notions of quantity and selection.

The *eggs* produced in the winter months are by no means an unprofitable store at Christmas and the festive season. Twopence and threepence, in hard winters, have sometimes been given for an egg.

Reynard, the only poacher against whom parliament has provided no law, is a most insatiate ruffian amongst the poultry, in the night; unless indeed their castle be well closed and fortified for their security. If he can gain an entrance, he draws the poor birds, one after another, from the roost, and leaves only blood and feathers to bear witness to his crimes. Whilst he attacks the birds, rats and

other vermin make equal havoc with the eggs; sucking or carrying them away with astonishing secrecy and dispatch.

Geese are not always inhabitants of the farmer's premises; for, as they feed with a somewhat unsavoury spoon on the meadow-grass, horses and other animals do not much relish their leavings:—in fact, they will not, if they can help it, feed after them. It is where there is an open green, or common, with ponds of water, that these birds thrive best, and do their owners most good. They are to a proverb stupid; yet have sense enough, in general, for their occasions. They know their home; and, at the close of evening, resort thither in a row, without confusion, or the least diversity of purpose.

These animals will live almost entirely on grass; and cost, therefore, very little, where

they can do no harm. At Michaelmas they are in season, and in the greatest request; and the number then disposed of in the markets is very great.

There are two orders of beings to whom the public are especially indebted for their literary treasures—I mean geese and authors. It is lucky when the quill does not come a second time into the possession of a goose, or one of similar capacity. The demand for quills is so great, that vast flocks of geese are kept in the fens of Lincolnshire and elsewhere to produce the required supply. Unfortunately for the poor birds, their feathers are in great request too, for bedding; so that they are plucked alive five times in the year for feathers, and their wings once for their unrivalled quills.

Of *ducks* we have, I think, a hundred or more. As they do not graze, or scratch the

soil, we are not afraid of any mischief from them, and they require small attention and supplies. They do not hatch so early as hens; and, therefore, it is common to put some of their eggs under a sitting hen, who will perform the office as well as if they were her own. She is, however, sadly perplexed and frightened, when her brood, notwithstanding all her care and clucking, take to the water, according to their nature.

I have now, I believe, mentioned the principal animals which the farmer maintains for his use or profit. There are others, which, unfortunately, he is compelled to keep, to his own great inconvenience and damage;—these are the species of depredators, of which I have elsewhere spoken as vermin, and those privileged robbers called *game*.

Hares, rabbits, pheasants, and partridges,

as they form the great inducement to the gentry to reside during a part of the year on their estates, and to spend some of their money in the country, it would certainly be unwise to destroy or extripate entirely, even if the laws permitted us so to do. The farmer, however, often suffers severely from the appetite of these creatures, at the same time that he is forbidden to indulge his own with one of their number in return.

HAY-MAKING.

And now it is the 18th of June, and though the weather is not quite so settled as we could wish, yet, as the barometer is a little on the rise, and the grass is fully ready, we think it

best to begin this most anxious toil. North-country men and Irish labourers are already at our gates, with their arms shouldered, ready for action. Ten days ago, indeed, they would have persuaded us that the fine weather was going, and the grass was spoiling; but on this point, until within a day or two, we have decidedly differed from them.

These poor men travel hundreds of miles from their own country to supply the extra demand for hands, during the hay and corn harvests of the south of England. They find their own tools, and make the best bargain they can with their employers; working either by time or by the piece, as may be agreed on. Three and sixpence an acre, is, I believe, a very common price for mowing.

The apparently simple and easy operation of cutting the tender blades and stems of grass

with the scythe, is, however, admitted by master and man to be the most severe bodily exertion of any rural employment. The strain upon the back and arms is very great; and many strong men are knocked up by it, especially at first. There is also an important measure of knack and skill required for whetting, setting, and holding the blade, or the labour is intolerably increased, and the consequence would be a scored and ill-cut field.

To be better understood, I will proceed to a small enclosure, in which are six men, set on to mow. I see by their cans they have not forgotten to empty them, lest they should be kicked down by a careless foot. Their wooden keg, or bottle, hangs snugly within the hedge. The beer we find them. The substantial materials they supply themselves; and as this is,

I suppose, the first job they have had lately, they will have but little to eat until they take money on account at night.

Pray how do my little city friends suppose these six men proceed with their six scythes mowing down this piece of grass? "How! why they need not consider long about that," perhaps you reply; "each may begin in any part, and leave off when all is mown." Not so, if you please:—they might, if they had no plan of operation, miss portions, or meet casually, or follow carelessly, and cut each other's feet. The way is this: one commences alone at the side of the field, and cuts a few *swaths;* that is, by the sweep of his scythe he clears a certain space, and leaves the grass he has cut, in a straight row on his left hand as he goes on. This first man in time and place is called "my lord." When he has got a

few paces forward, the second man begins also at the side of the piece, and just where the sweep of his own scythe will take off a similar width, without leaving any grass standing between his own pathway and that of the man who precedes him. This second man also leaves the swath in a line at his left hand, which forms another row. In the same way, when he has got far enough away, the third man begins, and so on, if there were twenty. It is easy to see that in this way no man can interfere with his companion's work. All is regular, and there is no danger of patches being left undone, to require a second visit. When the field is thus cut, the grass is said to be "*lying in the swaths.*" In this state it is best to lie, if rain should come on, or appear probable. At any rate, it is not usual to disturb it, until the mowers are out of the field; unless, on

the other hand, it should happen to be propitiously fine after much showery weather.

Shaking-out is generally performed by the women and children of the village. Any one can see that the regular method in which the grass has been laid by the mowers makes this employment regular and easy. The same plan is adopted. One takes the first row, and the second follows on the next, and so on. Now, we would not thank any one to work, even for nothing, who should conclude that the grass may be tossed about with the fork, as a cow might do it with her horns. If we have not sufficient confidence in the day to shake it fairly out, we order the swaths, which, perhaps, have lain already a day, to be just *turned over*, without much disturbing the mass as it grew together. If otherwise, the separation of the swath must

be complete. We do not allow *lumps* of grass to be thrown about, portions of ground to remain uncovered, and so on; but the entangled knots must be fairly parted on the fork, the grass must be evenly spread, and the party are to work in neighbouring rows until the whole be completed.

I must not be too long in the hay-field; and therefore proceed more briefly in my account of the business. The next thing to be done, after the grass has had the best part of the day's sun, is to put it again into forms, called *wind-rows*. Wooden rakes, or the hay-forks, are used for this purpose. It is then not so much exposed to the dews of the night; and, by lying in a sort of ridge, light and hollow, admits of the wind passing through it, which has nearly a similar effect with the sun, in drying the herb.

A little knowledge and experience are required to enable persons to judge when the grass has lain long enough, and had a sufficient exposure to the sun and air. In very hot burning weather, one day will make it into hay; but this seldom happens. Generally the wind-rows have to be raked into small heaps, called *cocks*, several times, if not against rain, at least as a protection from the dews of the night. Haymakers never commence this part of their work until about eight o'clock in the morning, in order to allow previous time for the dews to evaporate. Should the weather continue good, in three or four days the hay is made and ready for carting. Carts, with large ladders before and behind, or waggons, are drawn into the field. Strong men are now employed to pitch and load: that is, to thrust up bundles of the hay on long-handled

forks, whilst others in the vehicle receive it at their hands, and dispose it so as to ride well in a large mass. So much, indeed, will they cram in, and lay on, that the load seems as large as a considerable stack, almost concealing the shaft-horse, whilst it moves slowly along the mead.

Stacking the hay, is another operation which requires knowledge and practice. A spot is generally selected for this purpose, which lies high and dry. A foundation is first laid of bushes, faggots, or logs, formed into a square of about the size required for the supposed quantity. When the load comes up, one man stands to receive and deposit the hay on this foundation, whilst another delivers it from the cart. If care be not taken in stacking, the hay will be laid in curly bundles and irregular knots, which will not cut and bind well; but

we seldom have faults of that sort to complain of. The great danger is, in stacking the hay too green, or a little damp; in which case, if the rick be large, as fifty or sixty loads, the chance of its taking fire, or consuming without flame inwardly, is very great.

I never remember such a burst of rustic mirth as occurred one day—I think it was in the first summer I spent at the farm—when I said the hay was so dry, I was afraid it would take fire. I had heard of hay-stacks burning of themselves, and could not conceive that it could be when they were at all wet. My ignorance was made more amusing to them, and painful to me, by a good deal of conceited positiveness on my part, which would not for a long time give way to the repeated assurances of others, who had had fifty years' experience. Those husbandmen could not, of course, ex-

plain to me, that a chemical action, called *fermentation*, takes place when herbage is laid together in a mass, and that this effect is generally greater or less, in proportion to the degree of moisture present in the heap. This fermentation creates a sort of inflammable gas, or air, which, if produced in too great quantity, exceeds the due degree of heat, and at length consumes the fermenting body. The process of fermentation is required to a certain extent, to make good hay in the stack—or, as they say, it must have *a heat*. As it warms, it settles and subsides so much, that the rick appears in a few days scarcely half the height which it was when first set up. Sometimes it settles on one side; and occasionally, if managed by unskilful hands, it will topple fairly over, and require complete rebuilding. This is a vexatious occurrence to those concerned,

when perhaps, great exertions are requisite to do the work of this busy season once.

Whilst we are about the stack, we may as well see it thatched, lest wet should come. The heating and settling having taken place, so as to render it safe to house in the stack, persons, whose business it is, are employed for this purpose. The roof being formed, or topped-up to a sufficient height, with any inferior sort of hay, the thatcher and his *yelmer* go to work. Having prepared pegs and rods of split hazel, for pinning and binding down their work, the yelmer gets his straw in a heap, and splashes it pretty liberally with water. He then forms it into small lengthy bundles with his hands, and with such art, that these bundles shall frequently be longer than the straws of which they are composed, by being drawn out at each end. The thatcher

then mounts his ladder; and, being supplied with these bundles, or *yelms*, as fast as he needs them, he bends each double near the end, and twists it into a sort of knot; then, beginning at the eaves, he tucks this part of the bundle so far into the hay, as to detain it there, the ends of the straw hanging out. Having placed an even row of these, he inserts another row just over them, the ends of each new row lying half over the row which went before. Thus the straws lie one over another, like the hairs on a cat's back, up to the very ridge, which is, afterwards, either bound down close, or made with a stiff edging of straw in an upright position. The whole is firmly secured by long, bent, and notched pegs, driven far into the stack. The edges and eaves are afterwards clipped straight with proper shears.

When the stack has been well set up, the sides properly pulled (that is, the outside loose hay drawn out, so as to shew a flat firm surface), when the thatching has been accomplished by a clever hand, and all litters cleared away, the hay-rick is no mean specimen of executive skill or practical cleverness. This will stand uninjured, and do the farmer credit and service, after two or three seasons have passed over; whereas, when slovenly careless hands have done every thing wrong, instead of right, the heap looks like a dung-hill, and probably becomes one, from the rain soaking through the ill-managed, half-finished roof.

HAY-BINDING AND SELLING.

Poor farmers, who want money before it is advantageously to be had, seldom let their produce remain long in the rick-yard, or barn. They often send it to market, and lose by it, because they cannot wait a few months for better terms.

Farms near London have the readiest opportunities for this sort of proceeding. The markets there ensure a certain sale for agricultural goods, provided the sellers will consent to the *selling* price, which, when the market is full, is often very low.

Hay is a commodity equally familiar to our London and country readers, loaded in carts

or waggons for the buyer. We will proceed to the rick-yard, and see them slicing away the stack.

A part of the thatch having been removed from one corner, the cutter pulls out a quantity of the inferior hay, which formed the stack towards the roof; and, taking it down in a bundle, sprinkles it with water until it is very wet. His object is to make bands, or hay-ropes, to tie up his trusses with. This operation is a curious and dexterous one. A boy holds a sort of winch, made of a string-bow, one end of which he turns in a socket of wood against his chest, by a swift motion of the hand. The other end of the bow has a sort of hook, over which the man doubles a small bundle of the wetted hay. As this is turned round, it is twisted in his hand, and would form a

rope only a few inches long, if he did not briskly supply the receding end with fresh parcels of hay from the heap. The boy steps backward, as the band lengthens; and when at the distance of about three yards, it is detached, and another is as speedily prepared. Seventy-two of these bands—that being the number for a load of hay—have been made thus, by a man and boy, in twenty minutes; but half an hour is not too much for the work.

And now the cutter takes up his knife, consisting of a broad blade, about two feet long, with a handle standing square with the upper end. He thrusts this in where his cut begins, and, sawing it up and down, soon detaches a square corner. He then strikes into the parcel detached, a large two-tined fork, of which the prongs are about a foot long, and, thrusting

his hand in at about the same distance down the side, he brings off a squarish, flattish, and compact bundle of the hay; the external rough parts having been previously removed. This bundle is laid across two of the bands, which are then brought round, and twisted into a tight knot, with considerable strength and exertion. Hay-binders can usually guess within a pound the weight of a truss, which should be, if cut before Michaelmas, sixty pounds, if after, fifty-six pounds. But they do not trust to guessing. Steel-yards are always used, hooked on the shaft of a hay-fork, which two men support on their shoulders; and the weight must be accurately adjusted, or it will not be admitted to the market.

Thirty-six trusses constitute what is called a load of hay in the south and eastern parts

of England. In some parts a ton, or twenty hundred weight, is the quantity.

The manner in which hay is disposed of by the farmer, who sends it to London, is usually this: there are persons at the markets, called *salesmen,* who receive it as it comes in, and, on the proper market days, treat with the various customers who resort thither to buy. They are then responsible to the farmer, for whom they thus transact on commission, for the money for which it is sold, reserving to themselves five shillings a load for their agency. In this way, the vast quantities of hay seen in Smithfield, Whitechapel, and other markets of London, are rendered to the consumers of the metropolis; and sometimes so great is the supply, that country-dealers can go to town, buy and carry it home, at a cheaper rate than that at which they could obtain it where it was

grown. Potatoes, fruit, and cattle, are managed in a similar way.

When grass has been cut early, and the season holds fine, a second crop of hay, usually called *rowen*, may be obtained by the end of August. But, as this after-crop exhausts the sward and soil very much, landlords seldom allow the practice; and the chance of fine weather is not such as to tempt the farmer much to this line of conduct. This second hay, being softer to the mouth than the other, is preferred for cows, who often thrive very well upon it.

THE CORN HARVEST.

I AM happy to inform my readers, that, although I found leisure during one wet day to complete my account of hay-making, &c. the weather was remarkably fine afterwards; so that we have got up the whole without injury, or any considerable delay.

It is now August, and the same sun that dried and made the hay of course matured and ripened the corn; we therefore expect to begin on "*Shoulder-of-Mutton Field*" on Monday next. I take an hour this evening to put down a few things, as I can think of them; concluding that the ensuing

harvest will prove the same sort of business that former harvests have been.

Wheat, having a hard and stiffish stem, or straw, is usually *reaped*, or cut, with an instrument called *a sickle*. Some mow it, especially in the neighbourhood of London, for the sake of the straw, which is cut longer, by the scythe working nearer the ground.

The little finger of my left hand bears witness to the rash confidence of one, who, like many others, thought that corn was easy enough to cut, and who did not know that fingers' ends were still more easily shorn by unpractised operators. I nearly lost a useful digit at the second joint by an ill-aimed slashing stroke, one memorable harvest-day; for, taking a bundle of wheat in my grasp, I eagerly drew the blade too near under my finger, and paid a penalty in pain and the subsequent inability to use it.

A sickle is made nearly in the form of a half-oval, and has a toothed edge, like a fine saw. To perform properly with this, the reaper must stoop low, take a large bundle in his left hand, and cut accurately and vigorously with his right. A party of reapers, thus employed, proceed in the same regular

way as mowers. They leave the corn in small bundles at first on the ground, and afterwards tie it up in sheaves. The bands they make for this purpose are formed by twisting two small parcels of the straw together at the ends, taking care that the ears are not damaged by the knot. These sheaves are then set up, leaning against each other, in two rows, of four or six each, which meet like the two sides of a roof. The parcels so set up are then called *traves*.

August 20th. The harvest is general now; and we have one hundred acres down. We have been a good deal interrupted by showery weather; but I do not think the wheat is materially damaged. Our carting, however, has been delayed; for corn housed or stacked wet spoils fast.

Pitching of wheat, that is, heaving up the

sheaves on a long fork into the waggon, is very hard work. He who receives and adjusts it is not fond of an incautious hand to pitch; for, if the fork be thrust forward instead of being withdrawn, it is apt to wound the face of him who takes it. I knew one who lost an eye through such a circumstance.

And now the beer, strong and weak, flows copiously indeed. The heat is great, and the evaporation from the human frame, whilst employed at the same time in severe labour, is such as to require a great supply of drink. The small beer is dispensed without limit to the men; who have besides five or six pints apiece of the old or strong beer during the day, which day is indeed a long one; commencing nearly as soon as it is light, and continuing almost as long as the light lasts.

The scythe is now at work again, as well as

the sickle. Oats and barley, the straw of which is lighter, are mown, and so is now the second crop of clover. The harvest weeks are indeed a period of toil and solicitude, which none can understand so well as those whose essential interests are then at stake. To those especially who are in difficulties for money, and have, perhaps, borrowed for this occasion, the danger of ruin, from weather-spoiled or otherwise deficient crops, is an oppressing anxiety, which, I am sorry to say, is probably experienced by nine farmers out of ten in England. As with hay, so with other produce, the crop which by weather is reduced to half its value costs perhaps twice as much in extra labour to get it up. Let those, therefore, who regard as a calamity a shower of rain on the day of a proposed excursion, think how slight their trouble really is, compared

with that of the industrious struggling agriculturist, whose hopes and labours for a year are, perhaps, exchanged for disappointment and despair by the dripping season!

Our barns are now full, and we are preparing to stack a considerable quantity of corn in the rick-yard as usual. I need not say that we take the same care to secure the corn-stacks from wet, above and below, as we bestowed on the hay-stacks. The heads of the sheaves are, of course, turned inwards; and thus, when properly thatched, the corn is as well protected as that in the barns.

There is not so much to explain with regard to the corn-harvest as there is in hay-making, for this reason; corn is merely cut, carted, and housed; whilst grass, as we have seen, undergoes a sort of manufacturing process, distinct from the operation of gathering it in

as a crop. It is well, indeed, that wheat, for instance, which is sometimes ten months upon the ground, does not require more than mere harvest labours, otherwise it would be too costly a commodity for common use.

Whilst Philip is overlooking the stacking, I must return to the fields, and see what is going on there: I hear voices, and am apt to think that certain *unhired* harvest folks have commenced their operations a little too soon.

Such, I see, is the case: a party of thirty or forty gleaners, women and children, have made their way in before the sheaves are cleared. This we do not allow; and, I observe, they are aware of their error, by decamping at the sight of me. "Halloo! you there, the weather is too hot for you to-day!" There they go, pretty civilly as it happens. We are not,

I hope I may say, harsh or inconsiderate with regard to the ancient privilege and important hopes of the poor, at this season. Gleaners, although they have not actual law to authorise their practice, have immemorial usage on their side, in this country, as in most others; and we know that, under the Jewish dispensation, they had a statute right, which the owner of the field dared not infringe. It is evident, however, that, as persons are not always to be trusted within arm's length of the rights of others, the farmer is obliged to take care that the labourers, in the first place, do not purposely drop and leave a great deal of corn; and to see, in the next place, that their wives and children do not steal up to the sheaves and help themselves at leisure. A family has been known, by mere gleaning, to gather up a quarter of corn, that is, eight threshed and

dressed bushels, in a season—worth, we may say, three pounds or guineas.

The times are so far altered now, that there is much less of the free merry-hearted hospitality, for which England was long famous, than there used to be: but, I think, as much remains amongst the farming classes, notwithstanding their distresses, as elsewhere. The harvest dinner, refused, I believe, by few farmers of any consideration, to their labourers, when the crops are fairly in, still reminds us of the "olden time." The kitchen of our memorable mansion, being of ample size, accommodates our thirty or forty guests with "elbow-room a plenty." Boards laid on trestles, and covered with cloths of texture rough, but wholesome white, having been arranged by the accustomed hands, boughs are brought in to garnish the walls and windows, for the long-wish-

ed for "HARVEST HOME." On this occasion, it is customary to invite those old servants of the farm, of good character, who reside in the neighbourhood; and many a sunken eye glistens beneath the silvery locks, at the sight of those approved materials of enjoyment—roast beef, plum-pudding, and ale. It has always been the custom at Peak Hall for the master to sit down at this table with the men. Philip and I cannot see any benefit to the better feelings of the heart in that modern refinement, which thrusts the peasant at such times to feed in a lower place, without the welcome which the master's presence seems to give. We do not, indeed, tax ourselves to remain during the latter period of the entertainment, when beer gets above brains sometimes, and the company think little of an empty chair. We, however, generally manage to leave all in

good-humour with us at last, and then the best object of the day is accomplished.

There is rather more made of the harvest home towards Suffolk and Norfolk, than elsewhere, I believe. A custom prevails there, and in some parts of Essex, amongst the men, of assembling for what is called "a halloo largess." When there is company at the house is the time usually fixed upon for this, for an obvious reason. It seems a remnant, or shred, of some ancient custom; but so small a fragment, that we can scarcely guess at the original practice. At present, a number of the men stand together in a ring; and, bending their heads down, form a sort of bell-shaped appearance. They then utter in each other's note a deep lengthened sound, which has a still nearer resemblance to that of a huge church-bell than their figures bear to the

shape. There is all the trembling undulation of that brazen groaner, as long as they continue. Suddenly, however, each throws his head back, and roars out "Largess!" with all the power of his lungs. I have heard this distinctly, in a still evening, at the distance of four or five miles. For this musical entertainment, such as it is, a gratuity is expected; and it is commonly solicited by one of the rustic performers, who enters the parlour, cap in hand, and presents it round for the expected fee.

We do not put off harvest home, till all the crops are gathered in, such as beans and certain seeding plants, which often remain several weeks longer. Beans are reaped with an instrument made on purpose, called a *bean-hook*. In some places they are tied in bundles with rope-yarn, and set in traves like wheat; in

others, the sheaves are tied together at the top with straw, and, the ends spreading out in a conical form, they stand firmly until the bean is sufficiently dry and hard to thresh out well.

After harvest, the farmer should go to the great cattle fairs, which then are held, and purchase stock to turn into his stubble and other fields. Clover is frequently sown over wheat, when it is up, so as to form a feed for beasts amongst the stubble, after the corn has been cut. But when this is not done, there is a considerable quantity of corn dropped from the ears, which the industrious habits of pigs and poultry enable them to find, much to their owner's profit.

THRESHING AND DRESSING CORN.

I PASS on now to the business which forms, generally, part of the winter employment of the prosperous farmer, but which immediately follows harvest with the needy and embarrassed class. The process of separating the grain from the ear has been performed in various ways, in different times and countries. The eastern nations placed their corn in the circular track-way of their cattle, who were driven over it, round and round a post. This practice is adverted to in St. Paul's quotation from the Jewish law: "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox which treadeth out the corn." In Europe, threshing is the common mode: a tedious one it seems, but, neverthe-

less, as good perhaps, all things considered, as any other method that has been adopted.

The flail is a smooth, hard, and heavy club of wood, largest at its further end, and about a yard long, fastened by a leathern thong to a handle somewhat longer. The joint is so contrived by means of a part that turns round, that the flail may have a sort of circular motion, as it is wielded by the thresher. Before he begins, he sweeps the barn-floor, and carefully mends and stops any holes that he may see. He then takes sheaves from the *bays*, or elsewhere, and, untying them, spreads them regularly on each side with the ears towards the middle of the floor. When thus adjusted, *he* begins—or *they*—for sometimes three or four are employed at once—to beat the ears with the flail, at every stroke of which the grain flies out of the husk.

It is quite impossible to put the young reader in possession of this, or other manual arts, in general, by mere words; nor will the continued sight of the operation give the notion which is to be acquired by practice. The use of the flail, apparently so easy to the mere observer, seems almost impossible to those who first take it in hand. Unless it descend horizontally, so as to touch the floor with its

whole length, the shock to the hand and arm is intolerable, whilst the corn probably remains untouched. The danger, however, to by-standers, is still greater, as the peasant knows, who hands the instrument to an unpractised operator. He instantly skips out of the way, well knowing that the intended blow is far more likely to reach his head than the corn below. One or two thumps generally suffice to cure the young beginner of any notions of his capability for that employment. He walks off, blowing his fingers, and not much comforted by the broad grin of the rustics in the barn.

When a sufficient quantity is threshed out, and the straw raked off, the process of dressing commences; that is, separating the grain from the chaff, small seeds, and refuse, which are then amongst it. For this purpose, various

methods have been adopted. Those particles being lighter in proportion to their bulk than the corn, winnowing, or *winding*, will generally accomplish the purpose. This may be performed either by fanning with a large expanded machine of basket-work, or by setting the barn-doors open in an airy day, and then throwing the grain from a wooden shovel a few yards against the windy current. I have much admired the dexterity and success with which this has been done. The corn falls in one heap, and the chaff and rubbish in another, with astonishing precision.

But machinery has of late years superseded much of this skill and labour, not greatly to the satisfaction of the peasantry. Threshing machines, as we all know, were lately the peculiar objects of rustic vengeance. These engines, by the strength of horses and mill-

work, which we cannot here explain, will dispose of the winter's employment for several men, in a few weeks, or, perhaps, days. Yet it is doubtful, seeing they are expensive and subject to mismanagement and injury, whether the farmer gains much by them beyond the mere convenience of a speedy preparation of his corn for sale.

Dressing machines, for cleansing the grain from chaff, seem liable to fewer objections, and are very generally adopted now. The wind in these is occasioned by the rapid motion of wings, or flies, fixed on a revolving rod. A jolting motion is at the same time given to a wire sieve, down which the grain slides, and, in passing, the smaller seeds and particles are bolted through.

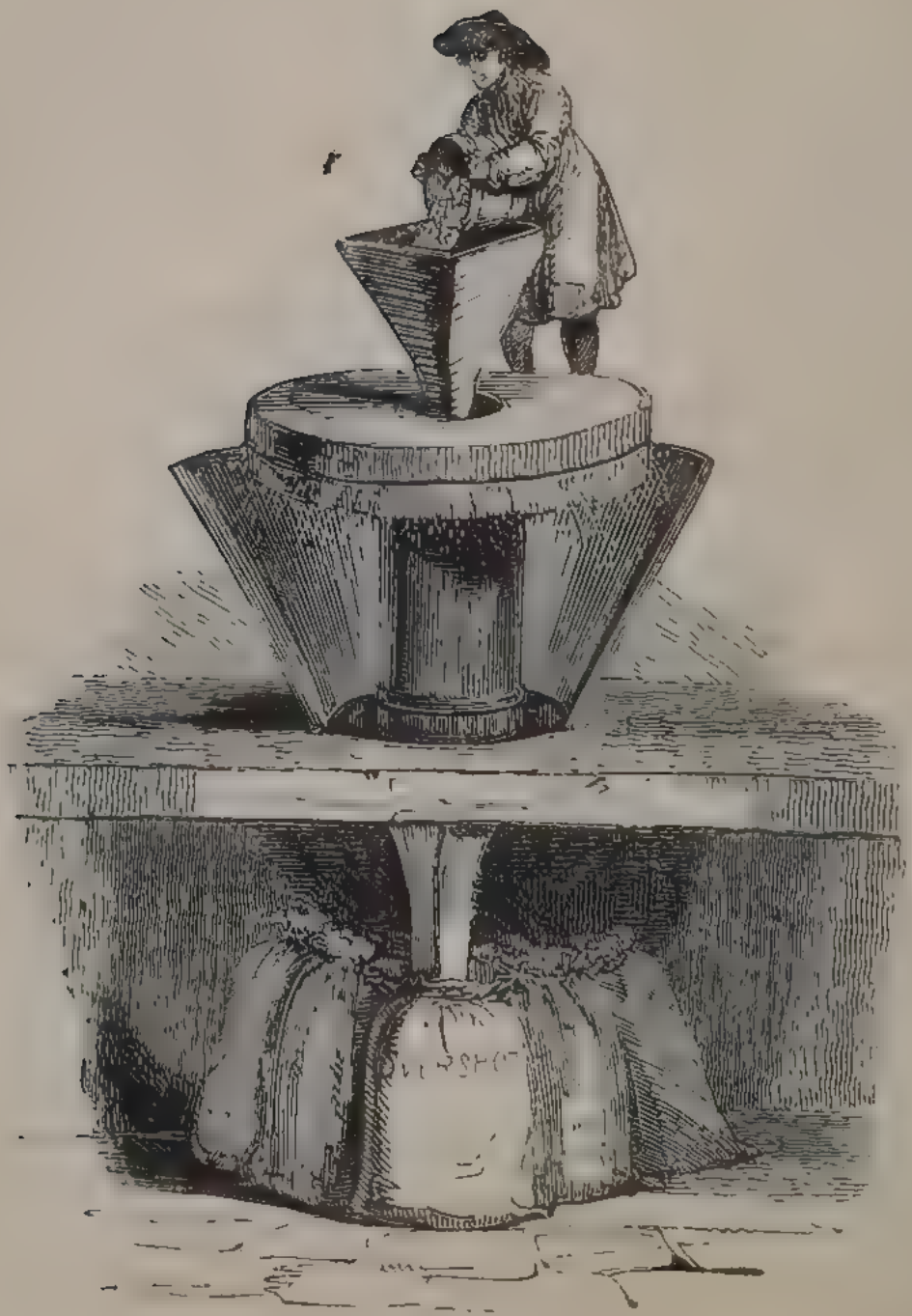
The next thing is to measure the corn into sacks for the market, or the miller;—much nicety, as well as honesty, is required here. The miller measures when he receives; and if there be a deficiency of half a pint he complains, and must have it rectified. Wooden bushels, of exact dimensions, are used. The top is struck off level, with a straight edge. Four bushels make a sack, eight bushels a quarter, and forty bushels one load of wheat.

The mode of threshing, dressing, and measuring other grain, seeds, and pulse, does not differ enough to make a separate explanation necessary. In all cases it is required to have the commodity as clean and free from mixture as possible.

The farmer disposes of the grain generally, by attending the neighbouring weekly markets, to which millers and corn-dealers resort; or he sends it to London factors, or sells to regular customers by private contract. Samples are usually taken to market and elsewhere in canvass bags; and on these bargains are made to a large amount. I see the miller in the engraving stands rather back, as if in doubt. Those, however, who do not understand corn, would derive little knowledge of the actual quality and value from the specimens or the lump. Persons are not unfre-

quently seen, and laughed at, who examine the samples, and talk about them, with evidently no experience or real information on the subject. This is often observed in citizens or mechanics, who have been known, with most consequential airs, to order *a quarter!* instead of a *quartern* of corn for a horse at an inn, pouring the grain from hand to hand at the same time, in the vain attempt to show how much they are *up* to "those fellows, the ostlers."

The public would get corn much cheaper than they do, were it not for the interference and rapacity of corn-factors and dealers, who step between the farmer and the miller, and merely buy to sell again. Of course, all that they gain the public lose; but this might be borne, if they would not employ their money as they commonly do, to buy up or mono-



polize the supply, so as to put almost their own price upon it.

Millers are frequently dealers in this way, and make large sums, not only by their trouble of grinding and cleansing the meal, but by watching the markets, and buying and selling, as opportunities for making large profits may arise.

Perhaps my young readers will understand better the process of grinding, by an examination of the engraving here given. We see here the part of the mill in which the grain is broken. It runs in from the wooden funnel, between the two stones: the upper one circulates with amazing rapidity. The stones, being furrowed or ground, bruise the corn as it flies towards the circumference. There it issues, and is afterwards cleansed from the chaff in other parts of the mill.

THE POTATO CROPS.

POTATOES are not grown in England, as in Ireland, as the staple food of the people; yet the quantity produced and consumed is very considerable, particularly within twenty miles of London, and on lands which have the convenience of water-carriage near at hand.

The early sorts, called *shaws*, &c. are cultivated with great advantage by the market-gardeners, who procure them as early as June and July, for the tables of the rich. The great winter crops are not, in general, taken up much before November. To preserve the bulk intended for winter store, they are put in clamps—that is, long pits, dug in the field, where the potatoes are interred, and after-

wards covered carefully with straw, which is finally roofed over with earth, so as to be perfectly weather-proof.

Potato grounds, in Essex, are frequently ploughed up, when the roots are ready, by which means they are uncovered in a very speedy way for the pickers. But this method cuts a great many, and perhaps leaves many more in the soil. A better method is to turn them out with a flat three-pronged fork, made on purpose; pickers following, with bags, or baskets, close behind.

These roots are commonly sorted in the field, and weighed there also, if intended for immediate sale. The sorts are three, namely, *ware*, *middlings*, and *chats*. In the first class are put the very best, as to size, shape, and quality. They must not be the very largest, which do not sell well; nor those of double

form, or covered with protuberances, which are also rejected; and not any that are cut, or green, or hollow. The *middlings* are those of which the size is less than that esteemed the best. The *chats* are the smallest, the damaged, the discoloured; in fact the refuse, designed for cows and hogs. These sell at about a third of the price of the best. The grower is obliged to give many pounds weight extra into every hundred weight, to compensate the buyer for the weight of soil and sack in the scales. The profit of green-grocers in London and the suburbs, who sell potatoes retail by the pound to families, is enormous. They purchase them at the markets for three or four pounds per ton, and sell them again at a penny or five farthings a pound; by which means their three or four pounds will bring them in not less than nine or ten guineas!

This could not be the case, if the London public would take the trouble of sending to the market for the commodity. As it is, the price obtained by the grower seldom affords him a fair profit, unless his land suits them uncommonly well, and he possesses great facilities for procuring the requisite manure.

TURNIPS.

Turnips, also, are taken up, and sent to London in great quantities during the winter. Those grown on farms are chiefly of the larger sort, and intended for dairy cows. These roots, as we all have seen, are piled in carts and waggons, in the most exact roof-like forms;

the stalks and leaves turned and built inwards, by which means the roots are tied so as to prevent them from falling about.

GRASS.

When land which has been under tillage is to be converted into pasture, some skill is required to select such species of grasses in due proportions as may be best suited to the soil, and consequently afford the greatest quantity of produce during the year. The farmer knows from observation that nature has provided in all permanent pastures a mixture of various grasses, the produce of which differs at different seasons; and his object should be to imitate nature in this department of his

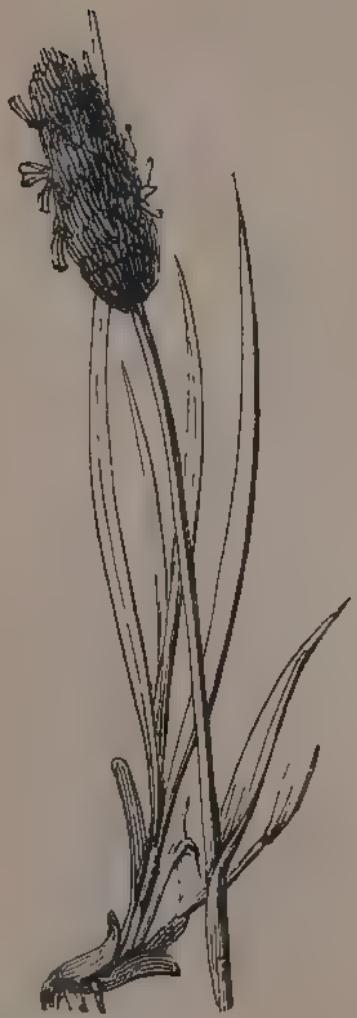
business. Many of my London friends, when on a visit in the country, have thought the blades of grass, constituting the sward under their feet, to be so nearly alike, as not to require the particular attention of the agriculturist. By grasses we generally understand such plants as have a rounded, jointed, and hollow stem, surrounded at each joint with a single leaf, long, narrow, and pointed, and the flowers of which are a kind of chaffy husk. According to this definition it will be seen, that the plants we have already spoken of, namely, wheat, barley, oats, and rye, properly belong to the grasses, although they are known as corn or grain.

The grass, whose tender blades and finely interwoven roots cover so large a portion of the habitable globe, consists of too many varieties to be distinctly described. More

than a hundred sorts are recognised by naturalists, but farmers chiefly concern themselves with two or three kinds. I have endeavoured to give a description, with accompanying cuts, of a few of the many species of plants, which are grown as herbage for cattle, more clearly to shew you how very distinct is their form upon a close examination of them.

1. The *Fox-tail* grass. It is said this grass is more suited for sheep and horses, who appear to relish it much, than for oxen. Next to the Fescue-grass, it is the highest in repute to make hay,

2. The *Spiked Fescue* grass. This grass is the best either for hay or permanent pasture, and in an important particular it differs from most other grasses, as it improves in proportion to its age.



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FOX-TAIL GRASS. SPIKED FESCUE GRASS.

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FIORIN GRASS. CAT'S-TAIL GRASS.

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MEADOW CLOVER. WHITE CLOVER.

3. The *Fiorin* grass. This is a very common grass on all kinds of soil, but differs in its useful qualities, according as it is grown on a poor or good soil. Moist soil suits it best; on a dry soil it is worth nothing.

4. The *Cat's-tail,* or *Timothy* grass. It was brought from Carolina by Timothy Hudson in 1780. It is a very prolific grass for hay, produces abundance of fine foliage early in the spring, but on very dry soils it does not succeed.

HERBAGE PLANTS.

Clover. The cultivation of clover and other herbage plants is indispensable in the management of an arable or corn farm. Upon land which is not so rich as to allow of being

constantly under tillage, but requires what we may term *rest,* by being for a short interval in pasturage, Clover, Lucern, Sainfoin, &c. are plants which the farmer finds greatly to his interest to cultivate. The clover family is numerous. I give you a representation of two sorts, *Meadow Clover,* and *White Clover.* Meadow clover resembles red clover, which I have not described in this little work, but is of a paler hue, not so high in its growth, with whitish flowers; it is a perennial plant, that is, continues to grow for a number of years. The red clover, which I allude to, lasts only two years.

White clover is also a perennial, and is often found in abundance in native pastures.

Lucern is a perennial plant, with clover-like shoots, the flowers blue or violet: it is not recommended by farmers who have tried it,

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LUCERN.

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SAINTFOIN.

for general culture, as it requires much labour to keep it from grass and weeds.

Sainfoin is a perennial plant, with showy red flowers. It is a native of England, on dry chalky soils. Its peculiar value is, that it will grow on poor soils unfit for tillage. It is good for pasturage or hay, and is generally considered a most valuable plant.

DEALING AND MONEY MATTERS.

And now, as we farmers, hearty and hungry as we are, by reason of our rural labours, do not grow *all* this corn and all these cattle for our own eating, it remains to shew in what way we gain or lose by the disposal of the produce, or by our various receipts and payments.

Farming, considered as a trade in commodities, *has* been a business in which a man of moderate means and capacity might, with industry, get wealth. At present those are reckoned prosperous farmers who manage to retain their property undiminished and to keep out of debt.

I will now mention a few of those persons, with whom the farmer has to settle, before he can reckon his profits. These are chiefly the King, the landlord, the clergyman, the overseer, the labourer, and those of whom he purchases his stock, materials, and implements.

The King's taxes are not, I am thankful to say, what they used to be: for, at one time, our agricultural horses, and some carts, paid duty. The *chief* thing remaining now is the *land*-tax.

The landlord, as proprietor of the soil, has an undoubted right to put any price he may think proper upon it. It is for the farmer to consider, before the bargain is made, what it will suit him to give, taking other expenses into the account. I may say, in a rough way, that land, in England, varies from

one pound to two or three pounds an acre, according to circumstances of soil, situation, and other particulars. The farm-house and buildings are always included in the rent of the land. We reckon that our four hundred acres are worth about £500 per annum.

The engraving represents the farmer paying his rent to the steward, who, pen in hand, awaits the slow process of extrication, by which the tenant draws the money from his pocket. In the adjoining room an entertainment is provided. This transaction is called the *rent audit*.

The rent and other matters being agreed on, a written engagement for a term of years, which binds the landlord to let, and the tenant to hold, on certain conditions, is drawn up by a lawyer. This, I suppose, I need not say, is called *a lease*. The conditions are called

covenants, in which the landlord is naturally disposed to take sufficient care of himself. Without going too much into dry matters, I will just say, that the principal covenant on the landlord's part is, to let the tenant have unmolested possession of the farm during the term granted; and this is an engagement from which he can in no way free himself; even though another should offer him ten times the rent.

The conditions on the part of the tenant are many, and sometimes grievous, yet such as men will consent to, for the sake of obtaining what they are apt to think at first will be a good business. He agrees to give so much money per annum in quarterly payments;—he undertakes to farm the land in a certain way;—to keep the house and buildings in repair;—to manure to a certain extent;—to

pay a heavy penalty, if he shall break up a pasture without leave. He engages, generally, not to cut the grass a second time in the season. Sometimes he is restricted from growing potatoes and from selling hay. He is forbidden to cut down the smallest timber tree. Sometimes the lease gives to the landlord extra powers of raising rent, and enforcing penalties.

And suppose the farmer cannot pay his rent on the rent day? The landlord then may distrain for it; that is, he can put a bailiff on the premises, and, after five days, he can seize any part of the property, and sell it to pay himself. The worst of it is, that he can also seize and sell the property of any other person which happens to be on the spot at the time. I have heard an amusing story of a certain squire, who sent a bailiff to distrain for rent:

the bailiff, looking over the fields, espied a remarkably fine parcel of black cattle, which he seized and sold without enquiry. It happened, however, that these were the landlord's *own beasts,* which had accidentally strayed thither!

The clergyman comes next: his claims are called *tithes,* or *tenths.* The case is this: the Church of England being by law established, it became necessary to appoint and support its ministers. Custom and law have, for many ages, given a tenth part of the produce of the land to the clergy, for the performance of their duties. This portion they may take either *in kind,* that is, the tenth sheaf of corn, the tenth calf and lamb, the tenth measure of milk, the tenth egg; or they may agree to an equivalent, or *composition,* which perhaps amounts to five or six shillings an acre. This

method is usual, and saves some trouble to the parties concerned, and perhaps too, some strife.

The overseers are parish officers, whose business it is to collect and lay out the *rates*, or moneys levied for the support of the poor. These vary in amount, according to circumstances. Sometimes they are equal to a fourth, sometimes to three-fourths of the whole rent; so that the farmer who pays the landlord £400 a-year, may have to find also £150 for the clergyman, and one, two, or three hundred for the poor—those only (it should be) who are unable, by their labour, to support themselves on their wages. This brings us to another branch of his expenditure.

The wages of men cannot long be fixed; they depend on the season of the year, the

demand for labour, the price of corn, and the kind of employment. I think I may say that a person who farms four hundred acres will have ten or a dozen men to pay on the Saturday night, at the rate of perhaps from ten to fourteen shillings apiece. The man in the print does not look as if he were receiving less than he had fairly earned.

With regard to the purchase of stock and materials; the charge for machines and implements; carpenters', builders', wheelers', and blacksmiths' bills; the cost, or worth, of his own produce for the cattle and horses which he is obliged to keep; we cannot state particular sums. All I can say is, that these payments, added to rent, tithes, rates, and taxes, are such as to make farming, now that only a comparatively low price can be obtained for the pro-

duce, at best a hazardous and in many cases a ruinous concern.

But, let the times be what they may, the farmer can never succeed who has not judgment, industry, experience, and perseverance. His payments must be heavy; and they will exceed his receipts, if he makes a bad bargain with his landlord, mismanages and neglects his land, and buys and sells imprudently. Before he can deal to advantage, he ought to know well and judge accurately of the real quality and value of the commodity, according to the markets. He ought to understand something of many trades connected with his own—as those of the miller, the salesman, the butcher, the grazier, the cattle and horse-dealer, the land-agent, the builder, and even the lawyer, as far as his kind of property is concerned.

He who is thus qualified, has talents and knowledge, which would make a man respectable, and most likely successful, in any other sphere or profession.

But the farmer is subject to numerous misfortunes, which none can prevent or foresee: dripping seasons, blight and mildew, diseases in cattle, sudden falls in the value of produce, a vexatious and unprincipled landlord. A few of these circumstances occurring together may reduce his profits to nothing, and compel him to waste his capital, and, when that is gone, to trade with other men's money; so that, at last, he may sink to ruin.

For ourselves, we have not been quite so unfortunate, though we have had our losses. We contrive to keep our thousand or two of capital together, and make the business sup-

port itself and us. So, hoping for better times, notwithstanding our present burdens, we are for Old England yet, and still say,

"SPEED THE PLOUGH."

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